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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[MEETING HER FATE.]

CINDERELLA.

CHAPTER VII.

ADVENTURES, like other things, never come alone; they go in threes, in my opinion, like misfortune, good luck, and the graces.

Pauline was better, much better, though Mary Ann still slept in her room, and one afternoon they had been out together shopping in the High-street—quite a dissipation for them.

Mary Ann was investing in a new dress, and had begged the benefit of Miss Rivers's taste and advice.

The dress was chosen, and was all that Mary Ann's fondest wishes had painted. She now had gone to the butcher's, whilst Pauline went to the post-office to post a letter (a third humble, agonised appeal to her sisters to remove her from school).

She felt that to remain on at 'Miss Jones's,' now she knew the secret of the house, the secret which was like a volcano in their midst, that seemed so unnatural, theatrical, improb-

able, and that yet was a ghastly reality, would drive her mad.

She would be *anything*, she had urged in this last appeal; their humblest servant—only take her away from Miss Jones's school.

As she turned round from dropping her missive into the box she noticed a large open landau drawn up, and an old lady leaning back in a fatigued attitude, wrapped up in magnificent furs, although it was an August day; a shrivelled little old lady, with a high, thin nose and sharp dark eyes.

She looked like a little old fairy, Pauline said to herself, with a smile, as her eyes encountered the piercing orbs of this aristocratic venerable person.

She seemed to have received a kind of shock. She started upright as a dart, whilst, unknowing of the sensation she had created, Pauline walked calmly away; but in a moment a powdered footman was running after her. Breathless he panted out,—

"Beg pardon, miss, but the Princess wishes to speak to you at once."

The Princess! Pauline had never even seen

one in her life. Was the man stark, staring mad?

However, she followed him back to the carriage, and discovered that the old lady like a fairy was the Princess, who wished to see her.

She seemed strangely agitated. Her features were working, her eyes blinking, her breath coming in little short gasps as she eagerly bent forward, and said,—

"Excuse me, but what is your name?"

"Pauline."

Before she had time to add "Rivers" the fairy had thrown herself back with a sigh of relief, and said,—

"Ah, I'm never mistaken. I knew it. Get into the carriage, my dear; I wish to have a talk with you."

Then to her coachman,—

"Take a turn of two miles along the broad road, and come back here. Now, my dear," taking Pauline's hand in hers, "tell me all about yourself—quickly, quickly, quickly!"

She spoke in a curious foreign accent, but with great fluency, and had like all foreigners,

a considerable amount of what is called "manner" and gesticulation.

"You are very kind," said her bewildered companion; "but there is so little to tell. I am an orphan."

"Ab, alas, I feared so! Poor Pauline!"

"I never knew my father or mother. He was killed by an accident before I was born; and she died when I was a few weeks' old."

"Yes; and what then?" impatiently.

"Then I was brought up at a farm till I was six; then I came home to Mount Rivers, and then I was sent to school here. I have been at school, and never going home for nine years," her voice breaking as she spoke, and tears, in spite of herself, springing to her eyes.

"Then, have you no relatives at all, *ma chère*?"

"Two stepsisters, who were older than my mother. They own the family place. They hate me. They are worse than nothing. They never write to me, or notice me from year's end to year's end."

"As bad as Cinderella's sisters," with a little dry laugh.

"Yes, with a wintry smile, "I was always called Cinderella by the servants, because I was brought up in the kitchen."

"And what is your name beside Pauline, my child? and where do your sisters live?" shaking her curls.

"Rivers is my name. They live at Mount Rivers, near Foxrook, in Cornubria, very far away from here."

"Ab, yes, I know them; tall, sharp-nosed, elderly, one of them married. The husband was a rascal. He is now dead; but he spent all her money first—gambling, racing, betting, affluence. And now it is your turn to hear a little about me," looking at her young companion out of her dark, hazel-lidded old eyes.

"Your mother was my niece—my dear niece, till she fell into disgrace with me, and ran away, and I lost her," in an altered voice.

"To think that after all these years I should pick up her very image and her only child in the street of a wretched little English town! It's amazing. It was Kismet."

"I am your grand-aunt, Cinderella, and I wish I could take you away with me now; but I cannot. I am returning to Russia to-morrow, I must go; but I shall come back again. I shall certainly come back."

"Cheer up, dear child; bright days are in store for you yet. I am going to be very good to you. I shall be your fairy godmother for the sake of poor Pauline. Kiss me, child. You have your mother's eyes. You don't know my name."

"My name is Princess Sophie Dormanoff. I am rich; I have no children. Politics are my children since your mother left me."

"Many people think me an old witch. I know too much; but I am not nearly so old as I look, and my brain is as young as ever. Here," taking off her glove, "is a ring," displaying a magnificent diamond one on her thin, shrivelled forefinger. "Have you any taken you can give me, Pauline. I suppose you have your mother's diamonds, *c'est-à-dire*?"

"No, I never knew she had any."

"What!" colouring even through her pallor.

"This must be seen to; you shall not be robbed. Give me that little silver brooch as a token; and when I send it to you it is a sign you are to come to me or that I am coming to you. Now, here we are, Pauline, and we must part for the present. I wish I was not leaving England to-morrow, for your sake. You have given me a new interest to life."

"Tell me one thing," said Pauline, impatiently. "Was my mother a Russian as well as you?"

"Her father was a Russian, her mother English. She was both, you see. Now get out quickly. Do not say anything about our meeting; but if I see alive you will see me again before the snow is on the ground; you may be sure of that."

And with these parting words the little lady

put up her fur rog, waved her tiny hands to her grand-niece, and was whirled rapidly out of sight, leaving Pauline standing in front of the post-office as motionless as if she had been turned into a pillar-box.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHETHER it was that her sisters were touched by her appeal, or whether they felt that they could not always keep Pauline at school, or whether Miss Jones had written to announce that her pupil was "finished," I cannot say for certain; but Pauline received a favorable answer to her letter, enclosing money for her journey (second class), and within a week was once more at Mount Rivers, where she did not receive a very warm or sisterly reception from Matilda and Caroline.

And so she was once more back at Mount Rivers after an absence of nine years. She was past seventeen, and quite grown up, and looked, her sisters said, older than her age.

She found everything very much changed, both with regard to the place and the people. Mrs. Taff was gone. Phoebe had taken her post, and was housekeeper and confidential maid rolled into one.

There were very few servants. Many of the rooms were locked up and the shutters closed. Grass grew high in the once trim pleasure-ground, the trees were in sad need of pruning, no carriage was sent to meet her, only a hired and musty fly.

The great, big stable-yard was empty, grass and moss grew between the stones; the vegetable garden alone was in some order, because the vegetables and fruit were sold to a man who had a contract for the garden.

Poverty and pinching were stamped on everything, and more especially on her two sisters than on aught else.

Nine years had made a great difference in their appearance. They were nearly forty, but looked far more.

Many women of their age have still a fresh, juvenile, bright Indian summer of looks; but they never were young. They were worn and embittered from their very "tears," and Fortune had turned her back on them almost ever since the day that Pauline was sent into banishment.

Matilda had married, shortly after Lord Rockford's defection, a young foreign count, whose charming, insinuating manners would win the very birds off the bushes, whose handsome face had played havoc with many a girl's heart, but none had such cold attractions for him as Matilda Rivers—Matilda, the mistress of all those broad acres, of money in the funds, of pictures, carriages, horses, plate!

True, Matilda was thirty, and by no means beautiful; but he could not have everything. He feigned an overwhelming passion for her person (when it was her purse with which he was enamoured).

Deluded Matilda did not discover this. She was enraptured with her fascinating lover, and, in spite of the advice of older people, who recommended her to look well before she leaped, and who were somewhat suspicious of this guitar-playing, sweet-voiced Count Villiani, she married him and became a Countess. Poor woman! It was the only consolation she had—this handle to her name.

He lived abroad (and so, of course, did she and Carrie), and at first it was a kind of royal progress, but after a time the huge cheques which he demanded of his "loveliest" Matilda made her wince. His property, he said, was in a little difficulty just at the time, but would be available shortly, and he would take her to his palace in the Apennines, where she would reign as "queen of beauty and of love." Meanwhile they must live, but living did not surely include gambling at the tables, betting, card-playing! He spent, and spent, and spent. He began to be harsh and tyrannical and neglectful. He no longer begged for money. He demanded it as a right, and she, poor fool, still madly in love with him, bought him smiles and his good graces by thousand of pounds.

In spite of Mount Rivers being a fine estate, with well-to-do tenantry and large yearly rental, it could not stand the continual strain—everything going out, nothing coming in. Farm after farm was mortgaged, trees were cut down wholesale; finally, in desperation, pictures and plates were disposed of secretly; all the horses and carriages were sold, and most of the servants dismissed. When Count Villiani had, as it were, sucked the orange quite dry and spent every available shilling, he forged Carrie's name for a large sum, and disappeared quite suddenly. Carrie had to "pay up." She could not possibly expose her sister's husband, and they returned to England sadder and wiser women, to live on the remains of their shattered fortune in a few rooms at Mount Rivers. After a time they heard of the death of the reprobate, and Carrie for one breathed more freely. By dint of most rigid economy they kept up appearances to some extent, and still held their heads aloft among their old neighbours. Miss Rivers and the Countess were to be seen at every entertainment within reach of the hired fly. Carry still hoped to marry; indeed, Matilda was not averse to trying her fortune a second time. Every nerve was strained to furnish up their once splendid dresses, and to present a brave, fashionable, youthful appearance among the neighbouring *dile*.

Pauline was very clever with the needle, and most useful to them, and was without delay installed as dressmaker-maid. Day after day she sat in their dressing-room stitch, stitch, stitching till her back ached sorely, and her poor fingers were stiff and numb. Carrie was so particular; her gowns had to be made and remade and altered and fitted half-a-dozen times over till they pleased her. Then Pauline had the satisfaction (?) of dressing her, doing her scanty hair, arranging her flowers, making her bouquets.

It never entered into either of their heads to take her to any of these festivities. She had volunteered in her misery to come home, in any capacity; to come home to be their servant, and they took her promptly at her word, with a vengeance. She took her meals with them, and went to church with them—a little out-of-the-way village church—at which no other gentry worshipped; but, beyond that, they treated her as an inferior in every respect. They had no by some mysterious reasoning arrived at the fact that her mother was not at all in her father's rank of life. No friends had oversought her grave, no inquiries had been made about her. As to the diamonds they were never mentioned. The fact was, the Count had laid greedy unscrupulous hands on them, and pawned them years ago. Nothing was sacred from him. And Matilda had actually persuaded herself—the wish being father to the thought—that they had come into Mrs. Rivers's hands from some suspicious source! Why had she never worn them?

Time went on, it was winter. Snow was deep on the ground, and still no sign of the promised visit from the old Fairy, as Pauline mentally called her. Winter gave place to spring, and spring in turn to summer, and yet she came not, and Pauline began to think that she was a mental delusion—disco that terrible adventure in Miss Jones's west wing.

The country was very gay. The lord of a neighbouring manor was coming down to live there at last, and the whole neighbourhood was in a flutter, the female portion of it especially, for was he not immensely rich—great lights in the political hemisphere—and unmarried? People said he was too much taken up with the business of his party to give a thought to anything else. But a late session, and hot days and nights of hard work had knocked him up, and he had come down to the manor, to which he had been so long a stranger, for complete rest. He was not to open a book or write a letter; he was to do nothing.

Now was the time to take him at advantage, thought all the mothers with marriageable daughters for miles round. He would have

ample leisure for hours of dalliance at lawn parties, picnics, race meetings, and even balls. He must go to the Duke's ball, of course—in fact, he was expected to make his first appearance on that occasion. Royalty would be there, all the county would be there, they had been looking forward to it for the last month—all the county, every girl within miles—except Pauline.

N.B.—Sir Philip was by no means the atrocious people imagined.

CHAPTER IX.

PAULINE delighted in dancing, and had a natural taste for it, a good ear and a light foot, and many a time she had waited about the schoolroom, on wet days, with her dear friend Letty. Her sisters had received a card of invitation for the "Countess Willam and the Misses Rivers."

"Preposterous!" exclaimed Carrie, throwing it down, petulantly: "as if two of a family were not ample. I wonder how they even know of your existence, Pauline—absurd!"

"I am sure I don't know," she returned, meekly, as she took up Carrie's broadened primrose satin, and commenced to renovate the bodice with some priceless old-fashioned.

"Mind you put it on fall—very full," she said, imperiously; "and leave plenty for two inches in the sleeves, and be quick. There's the front breadth of the skirt to be taken out yet and turned, and Matilda says you were not to work on her ruby velvet to-morrow, or it will never be done in time. Yes,"—approvingly, as she sewed away—"thus will do, and a bunch of brown velvet wall-flowers just there, you know. Why, heavens and earth, child!" very irritably, "what's this drop of water on my good body—ah! so?" tragically. "Disgusting! What on earth are you crying for? Are you sick?" querulously. "I hope to goodness you'll put it off till after tea ball!" with amiable candour.

"What are you crying for?" she reiterated, irritably.

"Oh! Carrie, how I wish I was going too!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands and gazing at her imploringly. "Couldn't I go? Oh! say I could. I'll not be a bit in your way—I'll stay in a corner if only I may see the dancing and the people. Do—do please take me, only for once!"

"What nonsense!" she cried, "I really wonder at you. Go to the Duke's ball! I wonder you can propose such a thing. In the first place, two of a family are more than enough; and, in the second place, you have no dress," evidently putting forward this fact as a clincher.

"Oh! I've an old Indian muslin Matilda gave me," she interrupted, eagerly; "I can sit up at night and do it up quite nicely. I need not take any time from working for you," eagerly.

"Any way, if you had a dress we would not take you—there's no room in the dy, your manners are not formed, you know as one, and you would be quite out of your proper sphere," very decisively; "three women, too! ridiculous."

"What is my proper sphere?" she asked, bitterly. "Dressmaking?"

"Yes," returned Carrie, quite frankly; "you have a great taste that way—quite a talent—no lady ever had such an accomplishment! To take after your mother; you see her lace, and we have long come to the conclusion that she was somebody's ladies' maid," lowering her voice.

"She was nothing of the sort," exclaimed Pauline, fiercely, flinging the broadened body on the floor; "and if you don't respect what you have said I will never see another stitch for you. How dare you say such things of my mother?"

"This was a threat that had great effect on Carrie. Dress was her idol, and Pauline was that idol's high priest, so, after a time, she said, very reluctantly,—

"Well, perhaps she was not. However, you

can't deny that there was something very mysterious about her, now can you? And, any way, there's no need to fly into a rage for nothing."

At this moment Phoebe came into the room, looking quite excited, and said,—

"There's a person downstairs to see Miss Pauline."

This was the first visitor she had ever had in her life. No wonder the announcement created a sensation.

Pauline's mind at once flew to the "Princess," her grand aunt, and throwing down her work for the second time, and not waiting to attend to Carrie's questions or speculations, she ran very quickly downstairs.

It was not her aunt, but an elderly woman, who looked her over very sharply as she entered the room. She felt a keen pang of disappointment as her visitor advanced with a begging position for the children of sailors lost at sea. Why did she apply to Pauline, and why did she scrutinize her with such keen, critical glances, as if she was mentally measuring her from tip to toe?

She hastily assured her that she had no means of helping her in any way, unless a shilling (if that was only one) would be of any service to her. This she produced from a wrinkled old leather purse, and handed it over timidly.

The stranger accepted it with thanks, and hurried herself away, keeping her eyes upon Pauline till the door was closed between them.

"The idea of asking for you!" cried Carrie, contemptuously. "She meant me, you stupid Phoebe! What does any one want with Miss Pauline? Preposterous!"

"Well, say way, the person asked for Miss Pauline, and had her name as put as you please," returned Phoebe, rather sulkily, and the subject dropped.

The great day of the ball dawned at last—a lovely day.

Pauline was up at dawn, and hard at work for hours before breakfast on matchless ruby velvet; and, thanks to her industry, the great business was satisfactorily completed by twelve o'clock, and the whole long summer afternoon was entirely her own property.

The house was quiet—Matilda and Carrie were both lying down seas to be quite "fresh" for the fatigues of dressing and the evening's revelry—so putting on a big shaded hat and taking up a book she strolled out into the pleasure grounds.

Poor pleasure grounds! What would Grant have said if he saw them now? High, rank grass concealed the very shape of the beds, moss covered the gravel, statues lay prone beside their pedestals, the walks between the shrubs were impassable in many places from tangled branches and a dense growth of unrestrained underwood.

Pauline sat down on an old stone seat, and tried to concentrate her thoughts on the book in her hand. It was useless. The fire, and a comfortable arm-chair, and a pouring day, with rain lashing the panes, are the best surroundings for enjoyment of that kind, (especially if the mind is not dwelling on other matters) not a halcyon July afternoon, with waving flowers, bounding bug-bees, and gaudy butterflies all about one.

The insect world were enjoying themselves—it was the season of enjoyment. All young things had their day—was she wiser to have hers? Pauline asked herself, hopefully.

She got up, and walked away mechanically towards the woods, with her head over her arm, and very bitter, discontented feelings in her heart.

Why was she to be different to other happy girls? For what was she being punished by this blighted life? She was eighteen, she had not a friend in the world, except Letty, from whom she was divided by the length of England. She had not even a pet animal, no amusement, no variety from year's end to year's end.

She felt all the bitterness of the pinch of

poverty in the house beyond, but had none of the alleviations her sisters experienced. It was her business and their pleasure that she should sit at home and sew, like the girl in the song of the shirt.

Thinking these thoughts she rambled on, and unwittingly passed their own boundaries and into their neighbour's. It did not signify—she had often done so before, and never met a soul.

At last she sat down on a great log, and leaning her back against the moss behind her, worn out by her early rising, and the heat, and her walk all combined, she fell asleep.

How long she had been asleep she could not tell, perhaps two minutes, perhaps two hours, but she was awake by something soft licking her hand. It was a dog's tongue—a beautiful brown and white spaniel, who was gazing at her with inquiring yellow eyes, and beside him stood a gentleman—a tall, very distinguished-looking man, neither young (to her) nor old, dressed in a light suit, with a soft felt hat drawn over a pair of intensely sleepy blue eyes, that were gazing at her with a curiously intent and critical expression.

She jumped up, feeling very hot and confined. She was not in the habit of meeting gentlemen, and was trespassing, too. Probably this was the lord of the manor, or his agent. She hurriedly scampered some kind of lame apology—said something about staying in unconsciously, and would not let it occur again.

"Don't go," he said, in a pleasant, rather authoritative voice, as he stooped to pick up her book. "I shall be only too much honoured if you will walk in the woods whenever you please. Pray don't go," he continued, with still more animation. "Sit down again. You are the very first person I have seen since I have come back to the old manor, and I hope we shall become better acquainted. I am Ralph Curzon."

Then this was indeed the great man, the desired of all. He did not look at all severe—quite the contrary. There was something so pleasant in his eyes and his smile that impelled confidence.

He took off his hat, and sat down beside her on the log with his dog's head between his hands, and said,—

"This is Rover, a spoiled spaniel, and now we want to know your name," looking at her with a smile.

"I am Pauline Rivers," she replied, rolling the ribbon of her hat nervously between her fingers, and colouring warmly as she spoke.

"Rivers, Rivers!" he repeated to himself. "Oh, of Mount Rivers. There were two Miss Rivers when I was a lad," looking at her dubiously. "I did not know there was another. Why, though, of course, to be sure. I remember," he added, "there was Cinderella. I beg your pardon, Miss Rivers, but it is not possible that you and she are the same person?" with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes.

"How did you know that I was called Cinderella?" she asked, anxiously, looking into the crown of her hat.

"I was present at a certain escape in a summer house. I don't know if you recollect it?" impressively.

She naturally remembered it well, and remembered, "Were you the boy?"

"If you call eighteen a boy, Miss Rivers, I was the boy. You see we are old acquaintances!" emphatically.

To this she made no reply, and he proceeded,—

"Where have you been ever since?"

"I have been at school in the North of England until last year," she answered, meekly.

"Never coming home for the holidays?" with raised brows.

"Never coming home for the holidays!" as you say.

"And you live with your sisters?"

"Yes," without raising her eyes.

"But I've never heard of you. You don't go anywhere, do you? I've never heard of Miss Pauline, though I often hear of Miss

Rivers and the Countess Villiani," and he smiled to himself.

"I never go anywhere, I stay at home always."

"And pray what do you do?"

"I make dresses," she answered, with evident reluctance.

"Oh, indeed! I see that you are still Cinderella. Tell me, why were there tears on your cheeks just now when you were asleep? It's odd that each time I meet you you should be crying. What were you crying for this time; did she beat you again?" and a peculiar smile curled his lips.

"Mr.—I mean Sir Philip Curzon"—she exclaimed, indignantly. "I don't see why you should cross-question me."

"Mr.—Sir! You are to call me Philip. We have known each other for years, Cinderella," he returned, boldly—"ten years, I declare, and the interest I take in you must be my excuse."

"Nonsense!" she returned, impatiently. "You know it is nonsense, and you are taking advantage of my country ignorance, I'm sure, and laughing at me in your sleeve. We met by accident once ten years ago, and now to-day. We are nothing but strangers. I never spoke to you in my life before!"

"Now, Cinderella, that's not kind of you. I am not taking advantage of your country ignorance, I assure you," he returned, emphatically.

"You are treating me as a child," she cried, indignantly. "Please not to call me Cinderella again!"

"Now you are vexed with me, I see; and, believe me, I did not mean to offend you. I want to be friends, and you won't let me, Cinder—I mean Miss Pauline. Look here, I want you to give me a couple of dances this evening. Will you? The first Lancers, for old time's sake, and a waltz, please."

"Do you mean at the Duke's ball?" she asked, tremulously.

"Certainly! Where else did you imagine?"

"I am not going to it," she replied, in a low voice.

"What!" in great amazement, turning half round and looking into her eyes as he spoke—eyes that were, in spite of her, brimming up with tears, to correspond with her tell-tale, quivering lips.

"And, why? What is the reason?" he asked, in a lower and more sympathetic voice. "Is it the sisters again?"

She made no answer, but two tears stole out from under her eyelids, and trickled down her cheeks.

"By Jove, what a shame. Of course, they are going!" sarcastically.

To this she merely nodded her head.

"Did you get an invitation?"

"Yes, and they were quite surprised."

"Why won't they take you? Did you ask?"

"Yes, I begged," replied Pauline. "I said I'd go only to look on. I'd give anything even to see it, even through a window. I've never seen anything," she continued, in a broken voice, "but they said two were enough to go, and I had no dress, and I would be out of my place, for I've never been in society, which is true, and I've no manners," and here her feelings quite overpowered her.

"By George," he ejaculated, and then seemed lost in thought. At last he said,—

"Look here, Miss Pauline, you shall go. I'll be even with your sisters. My sister, Lady Farrington, is going, she shall call for you. I'll get her to send over a man with a polite note to your eldest sister at once, asking if she may take you, as she has no young girl to chaperone. They won't say no, will they?"

"It would be no use," she sobbed, more heartbroken now than ever. "I could not go, I've no dress."

Here was an obstacle even to him, and there was another dead silence.

"One of May's," he suggested, timidly, "you would not wear it, and it would be too—too—I don't know what. Could you rig up nothing?" confidentially.

"Nothing!" she replied, hopelessly, with a shake of her head and another burst of tears.

"It's a bad business, I see," he continued, very kindly. "I only wish I could do something. I shan't enjoy myself at all. Cinderella, you have spoiled all my pleasure. I shall be thinking of you sitting at home weeping in the chimney-corner; but, never mind, you shall have something instead. It's hard lines if you are never to go to a dance, nor have any pleasure at all. I—sitting a few inches closer to his weeping companion, and speaking in a tone of much decision—"I will give a ball for you!"

"You!" she cried, drying her eyes, and looking at him incredulously. "How good of you; but don't, you must not for me, I am told—I mean," hesitating, "you came down here for peace and quiet and rest. Never mind; it—it would be too much—something else may happen. I shall get over this," now trying to speak cheerfully, falling miserably in the effort.

"It was only hearing so much of this ball and working at—" here she paused with flaming cheeks, "that made me wish to go so very, very much. I'm not always crying because I can't go to balls," she added, with an attempt at a smile, "and I'm very, very much obliged to you for thinking of asking your sister to take me; but you see it would be no good. Forget all about me, please," rising and holding out her hand in farewell, "and enjoy yourself very much this evening, and do not remember Cinderella."

"I should enjoy myself if you were coming," he returned, also rising, and clasping her hand heartily in his. "As you won't be there it will be as great a bore as balls generally are. I shall come and see you very soon," still holding her hand; "you may be sure of that."

"You may come, but you won't see me," she returned quickly, withdrawing her fingers. "I never appear to visitors."

"Oh! don't you? We will see about that," decisively, now walking by her side up the wood, and pulling brambles and branches out of the way of her flimsy cotton garment. In silence they reached the broken palings that led back into the mortgaged remains of Mount Rivers, and here he finally shook hands with her, and she ran away down the path in the wood at the top of her speed. It was getting late, she had still her sisters to dress. As she turned the sharp corner she cast one swift, involuntary glance backwards. Sir Philip was leaning both his elbows on the rails in the place where they had parted, looking after her still. He saw her turn her head, even though at a considerable distance, and waved his hat in a gesture of farewell.

CHAPTER X.

QUICKLY as she ran, she was barely back in time. Her sisters were both very cross at her long absence, though it was only six o'clock, they had had a light tea, and were all impatient and on the *qui vive* to commence their toilettes.

She commenced with Matilda, dressed her hair, put in her diamond stars to her satisfaction, fastened her dress, arranged her flowers, laces, bracelets, and even buttoned her gloves.

Here she drew a long breath of relief, when she was "done," but she had still the worst half of her task before her—Carrie.

Carrie's hair was particularly intractable on this occasion, and had to be taken down three times; then, in lacing up her dress, she unfortunately missed one eyelet-hole at the top, and had it all to do over again, and receive a severe scolding as well; in the end, about eight o'clock, they were both equipped and wrapped up carefully in soft mantles and seated in the fly.

They were obliged to go early, as the fly had one or two more journeys to make, and Pauline saw them away from the door with all the fortitude she could assume. Never once had they said, "Pauline, I wish you were coming," or "Thank you, Pauline."

She sat down on the steps, with her chin in

her hands, watching the sun set behind the trees, and trying not to think of all the other girls who were at that moment dressing for the ball, when she suddenly heard a sound of wheels coming up the avenue, and, raising her head, she beheld a very grand carriage and pair approaching, with a powdered coachman on the box, and a footman beside him.

It was at the hall door in a minute, and she saw that it contained her grand aunt and the begging woman, and a box.

"There you are, Pauline," cried the old lady, in a high, shrill key, who looked more like a fairy than ever, her white hair all worn in little curls, on her head a velvet cap, with a peaked front, studded with diamonds. "There you are," she exclaimed, as if she had only seen me yesterday. "Are you ready to come to the ball, my child?"

"To the ball?" she gasped. "Oh, no! My sisters have just gone," she replied, with as much fortitude as she could assume.

"And you are just going. Here, Therese, get out the box, and be quick and dress mademoiselle. I shall come in myself and superintend her toilette."

In another half second the door was opened, a big box handed out and carried carefully up the steps by the footman, the old lady herself following it, and bustled into the house.

She was very small and upright, and had the straightest back in the world. She was slightly lame, and walked with the aid of a gold-headed cane, which made her look more like an old fairy than ever.

Pauline led them past the gaping petrified Phoebe, up to her own bower—such a shabby little room, with no curtains, one faded strip of carpet, a painted dressing-table, and a tiny glass. Many an Abigail would have turned up her nose at the apartment.

"Get me a chair," said Pauline's aunt imperiously, casting one scorching glance around, "and set to work at once, Therese, and I'll tell her all about it. I've been ill, child," she continued, as Therese bundled the bewildered Pauline out of her cotton frock, and, making a wisp of it, flung it contemptuously into a far corner, "and not able to come over before, but I've had you in my mind. I knew this ball was coming off, and it was not likely your affectionate sisters would take you, and it seemed an excellent opportunity for me to come for you unexpectedly, and present you to the assembled world—my world—as my grand-niece. I sent Therese here to look at you and take your measure," here her grand-niece interrupted her with a little cry of delight and admiration as Therese quietly shook out the most exquisite dress she had ever beheld.

It had been in the mysterious box—a white satin slip, and body, and over skirt of silver tulle wave upon wave of silver tulle fell round her, looped with chains of silver daisies. The bodice had silver daisies all round the berth; there was a wreath of silver daisies for her hair, white silk stockings, and lovely satin slippers, long white gloves, a white and silver fan, and a pearl necklace. All these articles came out of this wonderful box and were put upon Pauline,—oh, happy Pauline!—while her aunt sat by and tapped her cane, and gave imperious directions and approval.

"How lovely, how exquisite!" Pauline exclaimed, rapturously. "I never saw anything so beautiful!"

"Yes, my dear, it's French, it was made for you by Worth, and only came this morning. I've long intended to act the part of the fairy godmother and to take you away, my little Cinderella, from your sisters. I wish to see their faces when they meet you to-night. I like a bit of comedy in real life—I like a sensation."

"I am greatly afraid they will be very angry," she faltered, with a sense of terrible misgiving. "Perhaps they will send me home," her heart sinking at the not improbable prospect.

"No, no, my dear, no fear of that," returns her aunt, decisively. "I am staying with Lady Farrington, Sir Philip Curzon's sister

and I would take you back with me to-night! I am obliged to go to London on business to-morrow, but I will return in the autumn and take you to live with me altogether. I cannot now, I am not my own mistress," she said, this almost in a whisper.

She not her own mistress! this imperious looking little old princess! It was incredible. Pauline's face reflected her doubts.

"Your sisters are paupers—and wicked paupers," she continued, vehemently, tapping the ground with her cane. "But I must leave you here for the present—it's safer," as if speaking to herself. "However, you shall have money, plenty of money, an ample stock of dresses are on their way, and a pony carriage and groom and maid. Your dark days, my child, are at an end, and I shall introduce you to many powerful friends, who will see that you no longer sit at home in the chimney-corner—*ma petite Cendrillon*—enacting the role of poor relation. My bankers in town will keep you supplied with money—money for your own use, my child, not theirs. And now, you are dressed, and it's time we were going. Is there any glass in which you can see yourself from head to foot? You are transformed!"

There was one in the drawing-room, and here Pauline beheld her reflection by the light of two candles. She was quite awed—she could not speak.

Here was, indeed, an extraordinary transformation; she looked like a young fairy princess. Her feelings were too mixed for words, she could only gaze in silence—stupefied silence.

She was then wrapped in a soft Indian mantle, and handed into the carriage after her aunt, feeling as if she were in a dream—a delicious dream—and keenly dreading the awakening!

There she and the box had mysteriously disappeared, and her aunt and she were *elle à elle* in the carriage, alone.

"You are like your mother, Pauline," she said, at last. "Like her, with the beauty of your aunt, Nathalie. There's no harm in your knowing you are pretty; you would soon bear it, and you did not make yourself. I hope your beauty will not prove as fatal to you as hers did to her."

"Who was my aunt Nathalie? I never heard of her," she asked, eagerly.

"Your mother's only sister."

"Tell me something about my mother," she urged; "no one speaks of her, no one ever names her—who was she?"

"My niece, my niece. You will hear her story time enough," returned the old lady, querulously. "I once declared that I would never hear her name again, but that's gone by; age and time soften one wonderfully. I am not sure that they don't make us do foolish things. If I thought that you would be another serpent that I was to nourish in my bosom I would fling you forth on the hard stones out there, and leave you to go in rags and beggary."

Her vehemence quite frightened Pauline, who trembled visibly as she sat beside her in all her finery, and the big bouquet in her hand shook perceptibly.

"Nay never tremble, girl, you have but to be meek and obedient, and that's all I ask. Here we are at the door," as they drew up amid a blaze of light, and stepped out on the carpeted steps, Pauline walking timidly behind her aunt, feeling half frightened and half elated.

It was all so new to her; the lights, the immense crowd, the brilliant dresses and uniforms, the fountains, ferns, palms, and wonderful decorations, and the inspiring sound of the band!

One waltz had just been danced as they entered, and as Pauline moved up the room in the train of her fairy godmother, she felt that many, many eyes were on them both, but most on her.

"Was she so very remarkable looking or was it her dress?" she asked herself, anxiously. "Did she look as if she had never been into society before?"

She cast down her eyes and felt her face getting flushed, and her heart was beating fast

in the bird's-eye view she had taken. She had not seen her sisters. Now they were beside the hostess, a handsome, portly lady, one blaze of diamonds, who was very gracious to the old princess, and more than gracious to her niece. Perhaps her evident trepidation touched her.

"Her first dance. My niece, Miss Pauline Rivers, properly speaking, the Countess Pauline Dormanoff."

"Oh, indeed!" in a tone of polite amazement. "The Miss Rivers's little half sister, I always thought."

Here her Grace caught herself up sharp, and said nothing more about her, but smiled, and told Pauline she was charmed to see her, and presented her at once to a partner for the lancers just forming; but ere they had taken their places they were accosted by Sir Philip, who looked as if he positively could not believe the evidence of his eyes, and said,—

"One dance, Miss Rivers, honour bright," "Ferrars, my dear fellow, I'm awfully sorry for you. Perhaps Miss Rivers will give you one, instead."

And she did.

Her nervousness gradually wore away after the first figure, and she found herself laughing, and talking, and looking about, and criticising other people in the ballroom, and being told who was who, and enjoying herself very much.

"How on earth did you get here, after all? and that—" he asked, looking at her dainty dress.

"You may well ask," she returned, laughing. "I had just seen my sisters off in their fly, when my aunt drove up in a carriage with this, and a maid to dress me, and carried me off as you see."

"Just like Cinderella!"

"Just like Cinderella," she echoed, in a tone of complacent conviction.

"By-the-way, what do your sisters say to it?"

"I have not met them yet," returned the young lady, smiling, "and it does not matter what they say," with a reckless disregard of consequences.

"The meeting will be worth seeing. May I be there to see," laughing. "By-the-way, who did you say was your aunt?"

"An old lady, a Russian, I believe, the Princess Dormanoff. I have only seen her once before," returned Pauline, candidly.

"Princess Dormanoff! I've often heard of her. She is an oddity."

"I believe so—I mean I daresay she is," murmured her niece.

"Did you never see her but once before?" he inquired; "and was this just a spontaneous eccentricity?"

Pauline then related their strange meeting a year previously, to which he listened with the deepest attention.

"And so you are half Russian, Cinderella?" he said, playfully. "Who would think it?"

"Not half; my grandfather was Russian, that's all," drawing herself up with assumed dignity. "Please to be respectful. Know that I am the Countess Pauline Dormanoff," looking at him mischievously from under her long lashes.

"Countess Pauline," with mock gravity, "I am your most humble servant," with a low bow. "How long have you been a countess?"

"To my own knowledge about two hours," she returned, promptly, "but I suppose, in reality, ever since I was born."

"This will be another shock for your sisters, when the sublime fact dawns upon their minds. May an unworthy, mere baronet presume to ask for three more dances, or as many as your ladyship will deign to give me?"

"I'll give you three with pleasure," she replied, "but I won't dance with you at all if you talk to me in that foolish way; it's worse than calling me Cinderella," taking his arm up to the refreshment buffet.

"Then I'll call you Cinderella," he said, boldly. "And, Cinderella, are not those your sisters banched among the dowagers opposite, and looking as crows as two sticks. They don't

seem to know you. Shall we go over and introduce ourselves?"

"No—no, not on any account," she cried, nervously; but they had already seen her, had risen, were rapidly approaching, amazement and horror in their eyes and gait.

"Pauline!" they cried, in one breath, as they met in a doorway. "What does this mean? How did you come here?" looking her up and down with eyes of incredulous envy and indignation.

"My aunt called for me and brought me most unexpectedly."

"Your aunt! What aunt, pray?" contemptuously. "What do you mean?"

"The Princess Dormanoff, my grand aunt, if you wish. I will introduce you to her when I have had some tea. We must pass on now, please, as we are blocking up the doorway."

"By George! that was splendid. I'll never get over it," said Sir Philip, helping her to cream and sugar. "I thought your eldest sister was going to have a seizure of apoplexy, and your youngest one's eyes were glared to your frock, and no wonder. It's a very pretty one, the prettiest in the room. How glibly you talked of your aunt, the Princess Dormanoff. I'm afraid you are not so timid and countrified as you would like us to think."

This she eagerly disclaimed at once, and protested and argued to his great amusement. Afterwards she brought up and introduced her two sisters to her aunt, who gave them a very icy reception, and then danced away merrily the rest of the evening, danced the very soles off her shoes, and enjoyed herself even beyond her wildest anticipations.

She danced with Sir Philip four times, and had various other excellent partners, and saw many admiring eyes following her as she danced, and heard many flattering whispers, and saw her sisters' perpetual stony stare. This gave a keener edge to her triumph. She was no longer "Cinderella"—a household slavey. She was the Countess Pauline—the belle of the ball.

(To be continued.)

LOWLINESS in mind is not a flower which grows in the field of nature, but is planted by the finger of Heaven in a renewed heart.

VISIONARY ASSOCIATIONS.—From visions of the imagination and communings with Nature come our noblest thoughts, sentiments and passions. By these visionary associations, duly directed, as Wordsworth dictates, we make earth for the time a paradise, and even our frail, coarse mortal being full of pure and exalted delight in the midst of human sorrows, wrongs, and disappointments. Any criticism, therefore, which tends to chill and blight these glowing emanations of the mind is injurious to the grandest and most beneficial qualities of human nature.

WALKING STICKS.—To break off a branch for defensive purposes, as Crusoe did on finding himself on an unknown island, would be one of the first acts of primitive man. A rude support of this kind would soon be followed by the pilgrim's staff, familiar to us in pictures of the patriarchs; and from these early staves down to the gold-headed cane of our modern dandy, what a variety of walking sticks have been produced, according to the fancy and fashion of the time! When, in 1700, footmen attending gentlemen were forbidden to carry swords, those quarrelsome weapons were usually replaced by a porter's staff, "with a large silver handle," as it was then described. Thirty years later gentlemen of fashion began to discard their swords, and to carry large oak sticks with great heads, and ugly faces carved thereon. Before very long, a competition arose between long and short walking sticks, some gentlemen liking them as long as leaping-poles, as a satirist of the day tells us; while others preferred a yard of varnished cane, "sorrped taper, bound at one end with a waxed thread, and tipped at the other with a neat turned ivory band as big as a silver penny."

A SUMMER SONG.

Car and call, and whistle shrill,
Cricket, lost in clover bloom,
Summer sweets your lifetime fill,
Have no care of coming doom.
In the morn, wiles fallen dew,
Wets your coat with dripping rain;
Let your joy break forth anew:
Sing a louder, longer strain,
Sing, and if you have a heart,
While it swells and thrills with pride;
Your small throat will ache and smart,
With the music shut inside.

When the noon-tide wraps the earth
In a haze of languid heat,
Comes a sound of smothered mirth
From the midst of meadow-west:
Ah! 'tis you, you sunny mite,
While we long for fresher air,
You creep coolly out of sight—
You are gay and debonair.
Sing—youthful—and cheer our hearts,
For the sound of pipe is good;
Were you gone, a charm departs—
Something dear, from solitude.

When the twilight shadows creep
Round the summer land of ours,
Clear and soft where grasses weep,
Comes your voice from hidden bowers.
Then we love your plaintive call,
Though it lonely is, and sad;
It is sweeter far than all—
All your trills when you are glad.
Shrilly through the darkness night,
We can hear you 'twixt our dreams,
Mixed with shadows, touched with light,
Till the sunshine highly beams.

We are glad through all the day,
We are happy all the night,
That you call and chirp away
From the dark to morning light;
Grieving when the winter's chill
Freezes you, and you no more
Cry and call, and whistle shrill,
Through the windows on the door—
Oht the thought a pain wellbrings!
Though the fancy of will creep,
That we still can hear you sing,
Waking from a dreamless sleep.

E. C. R.

A LOVER AND HIS LASS.

CHAPTER IX.

"Jove! knows I love! But who?
Lips do not move: No man must know."

With the dawn Ebedomon "renounced,"
and determine upon shooting to the little door
in my heart, where Love has been kneeling to
get in. He has just got inside, but out he goes
again, with one vigorous push on my part, and
no more shall he enter in. That door shall be
shut and locked henceforth. Love! bah! I'll
have none of it, banish it from my dictionary.
It's more heart-ache and trouble than it's worth.

I have ample time to put on the sackcloth
and ashes of fortuitousness, for Michael drives
Leila over to Bury market for the day; she
expressed an intense desire to go and see it;
and as Michael always goes regularly every
week, it fell out a splendid opportunity for her
to gratify her desire. A back-seat on a dog-
cart, which, of course, I could not allow Leila
as a visitor to occupy, not being to my taste, I
declined the drive, and remain at home to
dream away the hours in sorrowful regret,
garnished with good resolutions for the future.

In my new character of "renunciant" I
decide upon the first simple, but necessary act
of renunciation; and that is to go and drop
my dear little silver sixpence into the river,
where it first came to me, and with it sink my
foolish, jealous love, that it may torment me

no more. Colin belongs to Leila, and I must
put him out of my heart from to-day. Perhaps
I shall feel happier when my silver treasure
has gone from sight. I hope I shall.

Full of this admirable resolve, this judicious
plan, about four o'clock in the afternoon I
take the sixpence from its velvet resting-place
and wend my solitary way down the meadows
to the river and the old hawthorn. I fear no in-
truders, for I know that the Barlows intended
going over to Norwich for the day, and of
course Colin would go with them. No doubt
Leila would not have been so ready to go with
Michael to Bury if she had not known he would
be absent from Marling for this one day at
least.

Everything looks exactly the same as it did
on that eventful day of our first meeting. The
river murmurs its same song over the water
meadows; the poplars whisper to each other in
the stiffler breath just as they did then.
Only no brown eyes cries "Hi, little girl," no
fisherman stands under the hawthorn, and
offers a water-creas gatherer sixpence to fetch
him some bait.

I sit down on the mossy bank at the very
edge of the river, so near that I can see the
reflection of a disconsolate looking Celia in the
moving water, and a very wobbly shadow is
in. Then I take the sixpence out of my pocket,
lay it down on my lap, plant my elbows on my
knees, and resting my chin on my clasped
hands, stare at it as if it held my gaze enchanted
to it; in reality, I am bidding it a silent good-
bye. Taking a last, fond look, as we look at
the cherished dead, so soon to be hidden away
from our longing, loving sight, for I shall pre-
sently take it up, and casting it from me ne'er
see its little silver face again. With it shall
go all my stupid, hopeless love, my foolish
jealous thoughts. I vow it. Am I not a re-
nunciant?

Somehow it does go against my heart to
send it from me—the only thing Colin ever
gave me. Oh! must it go? Can't I keep it
just to look at sometimes in memory of him
when he has gone away from Gable End? No,
sixpence, you must go, there's no help for it.
Well, then, good-bye, dear, darling sixpence,
I say, my eyes growing dim and blurred with
tears, for it seems as if I was bidding Colin
good-bye instead of only a little silver coin. I
cannot help it; the tears will come, let me
have my cry out, then I shall be better. What
does it matter whether I go home with a pair
of red eyelids or not, and they will be red
without a doubt. I don't care one bit, let
them be as red as they like; nothing will ever
matter to me again, that I am sure. Nothing
half so much as saying good-bye now to that
sixpence, and with it Colin.

For a short time keen emotion holds me in
bondage, then reason comes to my aid, and
bids me be ashamed of my bitter weeping. So I
dry my eyes first, then the sixpence, and
finally press it to my lips.

"Good-bye!—oh, good-bye!" I murmur heart-
brokenly, and the next moment it will lie safe
in the bed of the river, lost to me for ever,
when someone comes treading through the
long grass behind me.

With one hand I stealthily cover up the coin
on my lap, and with the other resting on my
knee, carefully shade my swollen eyes, for
whoever it is they shall not see my reddened
lids, or that I have been weeping, though only
a minute or so back I felt I did not care if the
universe beheld my ignoble tears.

Then the someone's voice says pleasantly, as
if it were rather glad than otherwise,—

"All alone, Miss Celia? Day-dreaming or
castle building, which? Both equally deligh-
tful in their way, provided one is alone. How
comes it?"

"I don't know!" I return in a smothered
kind of voice, for my head is still shading my
eyes, and I keep my hand firmly fixed before
me, not turning in the slightest degree in his
direction. I should like to ask him what
brings him here? Why he didn't go to Norwich
with the Barlows, and also that I am sorry
Leila should not be here too; but talking under

the above circumstances is somewhat difficult.
Still I am resolute, he shall not see my red eyes.
"Won't you shake hands with me?" he
asks, presently, in rather an aggrieved tone of
voice.

Now, in the first place, I can't uncover the
sixpence, that is obvious, and in the second I
won't uncover my eyes; therefore not being
possessed of a third arm and hand I cannot
comply with this request, however much I
might wish to do so, and consequently remain
helplessly silent.

"What's the matter, Miss Celia?" he urges
quickly and concernedly, evidently misunder-
standing my non-compliance and muteness:
"what have I done that you won't shake hands
with me? Have I offended you in any way?"

"No," I answer in a small, weak voice,
muffled as before, and for the same reason.
"Oh, no, you have not offended me."

"I am glad to hear you say that. Are you
ill?" anxiously.

"Oh? dear no, not in the least ill," I mur-
mur again, rather more briskly.

"Well, what is it, then? Not offended
with me, and not ill, yet you won't look at
me, or shake hands. What am I to think, Miss
Celia I don't understand it. Tell me what
is the matter with you?"

But I am silent, and the river runs away on
its journey past the lilies and awaking rushes,
and keeps my secret.

"I shall think you are offended with me, if
you don't shake hands," he says presently,
reproachfully.

I begin to wish the sixpence had gone into
the pool before he came up, that I might have
one free hand at least to stretch out, and give
into his as token that I am not offended or
angry with him; but that sixpence must be
hidden at any cost or sacrifice, and vanity
keeps the other engaged.

"But I am not, really and truly, Mr.
Boughton, you may believe me," I aver with
muffled earnestness. "The fact is"—casting
about wildly in my fertile brain for a warrant-
able excuse—"I have rather a headache this
afternoon."

"Poor little Miss Celia!" he returns, and I
can feel that he is looking down com-
passionately on my obstinately rigid head, and
shaded face. "Is it very bad?"

"None so dreadfully bad," explanatory.
"But too bad to shake hands with me?"

appealingly.
Now, obstinate he is about it—quite dogged
about my shaking hands. I suppose there's
no help for it. Perhaps my eyes are not so
terribly red by this time. I sincerely trust not.
Keeping the sixpence well covered, and my face
resolutely turned from him riverwards, I slowly,
with a side gesture, tender my right palm,
somewhat after the fashion of a fencer, not
knowing exactly whereabouts his may happen to
be.

Stooping, he takes it in a warm hand clasp.
Somehow I always liked the way Colin
Boughton shook hands, even from the first.

"Miss Celia!" he begins slowly, still holding
it in his, "you've been crying!"

"No!" I murmur in response, gazing atten-
tively at the river. My eyes are red then still,
or he wouldn't say that.

"Yes! you have. Why should you deny it?"
loosing my hand.

I haven't the remotest notion why I should
tell an untruth. As I said before, what does
it matter, after all? Not one atom.

"Well, I won't," I say outspokenly, after a
second's thought over the subject, "I have
been crying a little—only a little, though."

"Now, tell me why you shed those tears?"
he goes on, calmly seating himself on the bank
beside me, speaking in a friendly, persuasive
way, as though we were the very oldest and
best of friends, habituated to mutual consolation.
"You ought to be a very happy girl. You have
everything you can wish for, have you not?"

"No, not everything," I murmur in dissent,
thinking of one thing I wanted so much to
have, which is denied me. "I often want
things I can't have."

"Was that why those tears were shed? Tell me. What have you not got that you want? Perhaps I might be able to get it for you. I would in a moment, if you only tell me what it is," he ends earnestly.

"You are very kind," I falter, thinking how odd a thing this life really is. Were the world but a palace of truth, how many heart-aches might be saved? Even in my case, instead of trying my utmost to lead him away from the agent, I might be able to confide my own honesty, openly, and then he could say, "Well, Collie, I am very sorry, but you see I love Leila Neville best," and I should return, "I know you do, Collie, and I trust you'll be happy in your choice." There it would end, and we should neither of us be any the worse for speaking the truth, maybe much happier. But the world isn't a palace of truth, but a palace of deceit, either for good or bad, and so it will be until time itself ceases, and eternity begins.

"Now, look at me, would you think I was a lucky or an unlucky fellow?" he goes on, tentatively.

"Lucky," I assert, briefly; but I do not look at him as he directs.

"You are wrong, then. On the contrary, so far from being as you think lucky, I am one of the most outrageously unlucky fellows on the face of the globe. Unlike you, who confess that you only sometimes want something you cannot or do not get, I invariably long for the very thing I cannot possibly have. The less likely I am to have, the fiercer burns my desire to possess. So you see that is being unlucky with a vengeance, isn't it?"

"Yet you have Leila," is my unspoken thought, but aloud I say, with melancholy composure, "The best play is not to wish for anything, then no disappointment is possible."

"Your advice, as far as theory goes, is most excellent I own. In practice I am fain to doubt its efficacy, simply because it isn't in human nature not to hanker after the unattainable; but we are wandering sadly from our first line of discussion. I want to know what you were shedding those sad tears about? Let me be father confessor for the occasion. I promise complete absolution beforehand, and I can't bear to think you are unhappy."

"I did not say I was unhappy, though you made me confess that I had been crying!" I assert, obstinately, the heaven of argument getting the upper hand once more.

"True, people do sometimes weep for joy, but very seldom. I think sorrow has the best part of that bargain myself. Well, since you won't tell me you won't, I suppose, and I can't help you. Of course, though, I may be allowed to form my own opinion as to the cause," and he roots up a little dock with the point of his stick.

Something in his tone makes me query hastily.

"And what is your opinion, Mr. Boughton?"

"Do you really wish to know, Miss Collie?"

"Of course I do, or I shouldn't ask, should I?" slightly querulously.

"Well," he continues, lengthily, still busy with the dock, "I have come to the conclusion that the cause of those tears has something to do with your cousin. You and Leila have had a lover's quarrel. Am I not right?"

"No," I return, sharply, looking round at him for the first time since our rencontre; "nothing of the kind. You are quite wrong. Michael and I have not been quarrelling, any more than—than—" rather viciously, "you and Leila!"

There is a tiny pause after this nippy speech of mine, when my tongue got the better of my discretion for the moment. Almost ere it left my lips I regretted having said it. Then he says, quietly—

"Why I and Miss Neville, Miss Collie? Why are we bracketed together in that fashion? I should like very much to know."

"Because it's the same thing, isn't it?" I mutter, stoutly, prepared to defend my unlucky speech to the last now it is uttered.

"The same thing?" he echoes after me, inquiringly; "I don't understand what you may

mean by 'the same thing,' in the least. I am unfortunately, obtuse, I suppose."

There is a coyness in his tone which piques me, and once more casting discretion to the winds, I flounder deeper in the slough of explanation. Since he will beg the question, he shall have it in good sound black and white.

"You are," I rejoin, ironically, "very obtuse indeed if you do not understand that. You talk of a lover's quarrel between Michael and I. You bracket us two together; why should I not for the self-same reason bracket you and Leila?"

"Lovers!" he repeats, as if I had mentioned something extraordinary and provocative of wonderment in his man's mind; "I and Miss Neville lovers!"

"Of course you are;" I take him up, quickly, before he can go on any farther. "You don't imagine people are moles, do you? Why," raising my voice a little, and speaking hurriedly, for the subject will be distasteful to me, try as I may to feel indifferent, "I've seen it all along, from the very first," and again I glance sharply at his face, to discover whether I have at all taken him aback by my outspokenness.

But I glean nothing from my inquisitive glance, for he has taken to gazing fixedly at the river in front of him now, and that profile is completely impenetrable.

"Have you?" he answers me at last, "You are very keen-sighted, Miss Collie. Now, what led you to conclude Miss Neville and I were lovers?"

"Oh, heaps of things! As I said before, I was quite sure of it from the very first."

"Well, since you have so thoroughly made up your mind that it is so, and you see such a determined young lady, it would hardly be any use for me to contradict it," he says, the next moment, rising to his feet.

"No," shaking my head slowly, "it would be no use—only waste of time. Why should you require to contradict it, when it is the truth?"

"Won't you congratulate me?" he says the next minute, and I see his tall, wavering shadow in the running water close beside me.

In that short, simple question I recognise that he acknowledges the fact of he and Leila being lovers. It only wanted this to make assurance doubly sure in my own mind. Under my warm left palm lies my silver sixpence, treasured for his sake, and he asks me to congratulate him.

I feel a choking sensation in my throat, a burning desire to shed more futile miserable tears, so I lift my eyes to his face, and falter out my lukewarm congratulation.

"I hope you will be happy, Mr. Boughton."

"I hope so, too," he rejoins, gravely. "You'll come to my wedding?"

"If you wish me to," I murmur, heart-brokenly.

His wedding! He and Leila married! Oh, I can't bear to think it!

"I should like all my friends to be there; and I wish you would work me some little memento as a wedding present, if it isn't asking too great a favour, Miss Collie."

"Of course I shall give you and Leila a wedding present; but I am a very poor worker. You would not care for anything I worked, I am sure," with melancholy composure.

"Yes, indeed I should! It's not the value of a gift that makes it precious, it is the donor's thought which makes it valuable. You will work me something, ever so small a thing, won't you?" he ends, almost appealingly.

I wish he'd go. If he stays much longer I shall break down into ignoble weeping again, and that will be a nice finish to it all. A pleasant profitable ending to the afternoon's entertainment.

"Very well," I murmur indistinctly, for that detestable little ball in my throat will make itself felt willy-nilly, and I wish the river would just kindly rise to the emergency, and gently sweep me off my back and carry me

away somewhere—anywhere, so long as I went out of sight.

"You don't ask me to come to your wedding," he goes on, and the tall shadow still falls between me and the sun.

"No," I return, feverishly, "I don't ask you to my wedding for a very good reason, because there will not be one to come to."

"But you are going to marry your cousin?" he asserts.

"No, I am not going to marry my cousin," I argue, very snappishly, "nothing of the kind."

I feel that if I am not cross I must give way, so choose the lesser evil.

"I was led to believe you were," Miss Neville, I mean Leila, certainly gave me to understand so," emphatically.

This is the last straw. My camel's back breaks under it. To know that Leila and he have been discussing Michael and I in this manner, to hear that she has deliberately told him a falsehood, and allowed him to imagine that we are lovers is more than human nature—that is, my human nature—can stand without comment. Headless and forgetful of everything save my rage and disgust, I scramble to my feet, unshed tears of scorn and fury blazing in my eyes, with the full intention of letting him know what I think of Leila's duplicity.

Away rolls the silver sixpence, which for the moment I had totally forgotten. Away it flies, and falls against the unsaturnated rock of the old hawthorn. I make a dash at it as it flies along, but it is quite out of reach.

Collie, too, sees it, notes its fall, progress, and final resting-place. He first glances carefully to where it lies in all its naked silverness, so horribly distinct against the brown crumbly earth, then, full at me, and to my mortally active imagination sharpened by the circumstances, I certainly see the faintest dawn of a smile, a very small twinkle of amusement in those clear, brown eyes.

In an agony of shame I stamp my foot on the grass and say—

"I don't want to hear any more what Leila said. I hate the sound of her name. Go away and leave me alone, that is all I ask," and groping for my handkerchief from my pocket, put it to my eyes, and turn my back on him.

There is not a sound for a minute but the rippling water through the sedges, so I look round to make sure he has obeyed me. No, there he still stands, evidently undecided whether to relieve me of his presence or not. Back flies my head—

"Leave me alone. Go away. I don't want you," in muffled accents from behind the handkerchief, for I knew that the hideous little silver face of my unlucky sixpence lay still uppermost against that tree root—a silent witness of my utter discomfort.

Of course a mule with one eye can guess what it means, can see that I have been crying over him. How he and Leila will laugh together over it, for I know how intensely she enjoys anything of that kind. Oh, it is horrible, perfectly horrible, I think, agonizingly, and a stifled sob will make itself painfully heard, try as I may to stop it.

Presently a hand takes hold of my wrist, and a voice says quite sorrowfully—

"Don't cry, Collie!"

"Go away," I murmur, giving my wrist a little shake, as if I wanted to knock off an earwig or a stinging ant, for the touch is very light and—yes! and kind. I am sure it means to be—and another small sob hovers on the air.

"Don't cry, dear little Collie!" says the voice again, taking no notice of that potent wrist shake of mine; and the other arm comes right round me, and draws me close.

"Go away," I murmur again, with but very feeble remonstrance now I own, my handkerchief still pressed against my eyes, but the sob has winged their way to Heaven ere this, and the little thresome ball in my throat has disappeared.

There is something so warm and comforting, and pleasant in that protesting arm that my anger and sorrowful heartache seems to glide away. He is not my Colin, but Leila's. Still in my heart of hearts I know I love him, and he wants to be very kind and sympathetic, I am certain. What a blessed thing sympathy is. I feel better already—better and happier. After all it is nice to have a friend, even if it should be a man friend, to comfort one, and I do want comforting sadly. I make no effort, therefore, to remove myself from that protesting arm, for Colin evidently wishes to be my friend, and so he shall be—my dear, kind friend!

"There, there," he says in a voice of tender pity; "don't cry any more, please. You make me feel such a brute," and he pulls one hand away from my eyes.

"I'm not crying, I've left off now," I return with a final dab at my wet orbs with the remaining hand, and trying hard to force a winty smile for his benefit, lest he should continue to call himself a brute. Then it strikes me that perhaps it might be time to withdraw from that arm. I do not consider in any way that it was traitorous to Leila in allowing it to stay round me, because I know Colin only wishes to show he is sorry for me, and to make his peace; and it did do me good, there's not a doubt about that.

"I'm all right now," I say quietly, conveying my damp handkerchief back into its pocket, "I think I'll go home," and I move over so slightly round, but that arm is very unyielding, and so strong, too, that it would require greater force to put it aside than I care to use.

"No, you are not going home yet, not until you've told me what you were crying for," he says persistently.

"Then I shall stay here for ever, because I shall never tell you that," I remark, with the ghost of a smile coming into my face.

"Yes, you will. I'm sure you will. Come, out with it; I'm waiting to hear."

"No, never," with obstinate emphasis.

"You naughty little thing," he says slowly, looking down at me. "Tell me at once."

"I will not!" I rejoin mutiniously.

He surveys me for a moment with a look of intense interest; then he says calmly, as if enunciating some weighty fact,—

"Celia! do you know that you are a little—darling!"

My heart begins to beat fiercely. It is doubtless very sweet to hear him say this. I do not for one second deny that it is so; but is it right? Hardly, I think. Scarcely what even one's man friend would, or ought to say; and Colin is only my friend as I said.

"You mustn't say that," I put in quickly, drooping my head a little. "It isn't right. What would Leila say if she heard you. Please don't."

"It wouldn't matter to me what a hundred Leilas said. Leila Neville is nothing to me—less than nothing, if that were possible," he returns forcibly.

My heart gives a great leap. Have I been wrong all this time? Can I have been mistaken, jumped to a wrong conclusion after all? Yet he did not deny it just now, when I was so sure, and told him so, but then I also remember he did not avow it either, and now he completely repudiates the idea. Have I really erred? Can it indeed be possible?

"Do you mean that you are not in love with her?" I query in low-voiced amazement.

"I most certainly mean it. I cannot imagine whatever made you think so for one moment. Nothing would be more unlikely than for me to love Leila Neville. You would say so, too, if you knew a little story I could tell you, and, perhaps, you shall hear it by-and-by. No, the only girl I love is little Celia!" and the arm holds me very, very close now.

I answer nothing, am as absolutely speechless, as if I had been stricken with sudden dumbness. Colin is not my friend, my dear friend; he is my lover, my lover, sings my

heart in silent ecstasy. Oh! how blind I have been—how execrably, besottedly, blind!

"Mustn't I say that either?" he goes on presently. "Is that wrong, too, or may I be allowed to express my sentiments for this once," and he takes off my hat, flings it on the grass, and lays my head against his breast carelessly. I can feel the beating of his heart, and mine throbs in unison. Never till this moment have I dreamt what love is, what it could be. I sigh in utter human bliss, lost in the profundity of a new-born happiness.

"Answer me, Celia. Let me hear you say something. Do you love me ever such a little bit in return? I believe you do, but I must hear you say so before I shall be quite satisfied. Were you crying about me? Now tell the truth, you perverse little thing."

"Yes!" I own reluctantly, keeping my eyes downwards, but it costs me a very small pang to confess it now. I have absolutely nothing to conceal, since Colin loves me. I can afford to laugh at tears, heartache, sorrow, everything—for the present at least.

"It struck me suddenly that you might be, when you got up in that small fury to denounce either her or myself, both probably, and away rolled that blessed sixpence, lying over there so peacefully. That, somehow, seemed to open my eyes, because you see I naturally argued that unless you cared for it, or rather for the donor, you would not have shed tears over it. But for that little episode we might still have been unhappy victims to unuttered love, for Leila Neville distinctly asserted that you adored your cousin. Of course I believed her, not imagining she had any motive for telling me an untruth; and I was very fond of you all the time, dearest. Certainly, I have not much to thank her for."

"I think Leila rather wanted you herself," I hazard, presently.

"I am not at all sure she doesn't," he answers, with a half laugh; "perhaps that is why she tried to prevent my having you instead. I thought she had finished all that ever so long ago."

"Then you did like her once?" I query, hastily, raising my head, and looking up searchingly into those brown eyes.

"Yes!" he answers, candidly; "I did like her once; I don't think I ever loved her, certainly not as I love you, my darling," lightly kissing my forehead.

"Tell me about it?" I say, reassured at once by his look, laying my head down again on what now seems its natural resting-place; "tell me all about it, from the beginning. Don't think I shall mind one bit. I will not feel an atom angry or—or jealous!" I end, with ever so small a pang at the recollection of my late miserable jealousy.

"Well dearest, long ago, long before I ever saw or dreamt of a little damsel called Celia Lascelles, just four years ago, in fact, I met Leila Neville down at a country house in Devonshire. She was one of those girls charming to flirt with in a harmless happy-go-lucky kind of way, lively, spirited, a capital companion for one's walks or partner at tennis, but as a wife hardly the sort of girl a man chooses unless he doesn't care much for any heart in the bargain. A trifle too rustic, too glib in the world's jargon. However, we flirted desperately for the time being. You see I am telling you the whole truth."

"I asked you for it," I say placidly, "but you never flirted like that with me!"

"No, because you would never let me," he returns, comically; "you were always such an innocently prosaic little damsel that all my highly-coloured speeches fell to the ground. But I don't believe I ever could have flirted with you in the sense that Leila Neville and I did down in Devonshire four years ago. Well, to go on with my story, she made me believe that she was desperately in love with me. Perhaps I was foolish enough, and vain enough, to believe it was so, and for a little time had serious thoughts of proposing to her. Then my brother Daryl came down, and she suddenly changed her tactics. I afterwards heard from

our hostess, a jolly kind of woman, bent on match-making, that Leila Neville imagined I was the elder of the two, and my father's heir; and she never contradicted the belief, thinking it might spoil the chance of a match between us, for Mrs. Lammell's pride was to be able to boast of how many marriages had been brought about in her house and by her efforts during each summer. Of the suitability of these matches I do not imagine she ever thought of for one moment, and I believe many of them have turned out unhappily, simply because they were made to fall in love, and not left to do so of their own accord. At any rate, Mrs. Lammell had done her very best to foster our strong flirtation into serious love-making. Then Daryl, taking it into his head to join me, spoiled her charming plans. Leila Neville at once took him in tow, and exercised the whole battery of her fascinations on him."

"Weren't you very angry? I should have been I think were I in your place," I remark, secure in the knowledge that four whole years have come and gone since this happened, and Colin did not know me then, as he says.

"I confess I did feel considerably piqued at first, especially as she didn't leave me completely out in the cold. She tried to drive tandem, to put it homely. She meant to have one of us—Daryl if she could, failing him to fall back upon myself."

"That's just like Leila," I exclaim, with disapprobation, thinking how she has tried to keep Colin and I apart. "She will be double-aced. I don't believe she can help it."

"Well, I was not so much in love that I was blind to her charming intention. I knew Daryl was not a marrying man, and you'll say so when you see him, and are introduced to the family generally. I knew he was only flirting, and no more intended to marry her than I am likely to grow wings now and fly away from Marling. Anyway, I confided to him my suspicions, and we talked the matter over between ourselves. The consequence was my wild brother played a nice little game with Miss Leila Neville; until one fine morning he took himself off just as she imagined the plum was going to drop into her mouth. She at once turned sweetly again to me; but by this time, dearest, I was cured of the smallest lingering regard, which might by courtesy be stretched into love. I saw her as she is—vain, deceitful, heartless, and perfectly selfish. Mrs. Lammell tried hard to patch up the rift. She talked confidentially, assured me that Leila Neville had confessed to her privately that she was much attached to me, and only flirted with Daryl to bring me to the point. It may have been so. I do believe in her selfish way she liked me better than any other man; but I know it would be a pale, cold love, which I would not give a thank-you to possess. I soon left Devonshire, and never since then have we met until that Monday morning."

"Was she very sorry when you said good-bye to her?" I query, bent on hearing the whole, true and particular account while I am about it.

"I suppose she was," he answers, carelessly. "At least, she pretended to be—a mixture of sorrow and disappointment I imagine myself. She said I had treated her very badly; but there she was wrong. I had a good deal more to complain of than she had if I cared to do so; but you see, my Celia, I did not care. It was a matter of indifference to me, so I allowed her to say what she pleased, without any contradiction on my part. I've no doubt, in my own mind, she flirted desperately with some other fellow the moment I was out of sight."

"Poor Leila," I say, gravely, thinking that if she really did love Colin it was rather hard lines to bid him good-bye like that, but then she only had herself to thank for it; it was all her own fault. I almost forgive her her deceit, out of pity, when I think how she must feel, knowing that Colin might have been hers once

upon a time, and is now completely out of reach.

"I do not confess she is much to be pitied," he argues, smoothing my cheek with his hand, "nor I either. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and had it been otherwise, why, when we met I might have been married and done for. Only think of that!" gaily.

"I don't want to think about it," I murmur; "I would much rather not. It is nicer as it is. And my heart is quite at rest about Leila now."

"Do you know, little mademoiselle, I do believe you were jealous a tiny bit," he says, presently, looking down into my face, tenderly. "Looking back on your small vagaries, such as obstinately keeping aloof from me, delivering me over into Leila Neville's hands, and refusing to let me swing you, &c., and knowing now that you did not dislike poor me all the time, why I can only come to the conclusion that you were ever so little a bit jealous."

"I very much fear I was," I assent, truthfully, wrinkling my brows; "but, indeed, I never, never will be so again," very earnestly.

"As far as I am concerned you shall never have any cause to be, my darling. I promise you that faithfully. There is one little thing, Leila, that you have quite forgotten to give me though," he ends, meaningly.

"Is there? What is it?" wondering what he means.

"You have quite forgotten to give me a true lover's kiss to seal our compact. Come, put up that sweet little red mouth of yours at once, and say, 'dear Colin, I love you,'" commandingly. "You know what La Rochefoucauld says on the subject: 'They do not love that do not show their love.'"

All my mischievous spirit, my jealous misgivings, my sad heartache, has floated away, as obediently I murmur,—

"Dear Colin, I love you," raising my mouth to his, and our lips meet, softly, longingly, full of a perfect love.

"Oh! my soul's joy; if after every tempest comes such calms,

May the winds blow till they have wakened death. If it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy, for I fear

My soul hath her content so absolute, that not another comfort like to this Succeeds in unknown Fate."

To be continued.)

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH was received on his unexpected visit to Galway with an extempore display of enthusiasm which argued well for the impression he made there a couple of years ago, when he went coasting along the west of Ireland for the purpose of superintending the distribution of food supplies to the famine ravaged localities of Connaught.

SWEDISH WOMEN AT HOME.—The white or black handkerchief worn upon the heads of the women appear everywhere, and beneath the front edge of these head-dresses the hair is seen to be brushed smoothly and plainly back over noticeably broad, clear, fair brows. The women are often observed working in the fields and bearing heavy burdens, but their appearance does not present such marked and distressing evidence of premature age, nor their forms look so crushed down and bent by toil, as in Germany. They flock to the cities in search of employment, and may be often seen carrying bricks-and-mortar for the scanty wages of one krone per day; but such is their extreme frugality that many of them actually accumulate out of their slender remuneration of twenty-seven cents a day a property sufficient for their old age. A gentleman told us of one energetic woman who, out of such earnings, saved up enough to start a small factory, which, under her frugal, wise management, has grown into a thriving business, until now this quondam hod carrier has become a rich factory proprietor.

OPALS AND DIAMONDS.

CHAPTER XVII.—(continued).

"I AM so sorry you have promised to go with aunt," said Maggie, when they were left alone."

"Are you, why?"

"Because Li is going to take a house in town for the season, and Eunice is to go with us, and he said I might ask you if I liked. Would you have come?"

"Certainly, my dear," responded Miss Randal, with her usual promptness. "I should have only been too well pleased to have enjoyed a season in town under the chaperonage of Lady Molyneux. It will make my slavery harder to bear," she added, with a sigh.

"Can't you get out of going abroad? Tell her to advertise for a companion. Say you would prefer remaining in England."

"That would hardly do. She would be mortally offended."

"Well, what if she is?"

"What if she is! Why, we won't get her money, and she must have a considerable amount saved."

"No, I suppose not; and as Laura and Kate have married men with moderate incomes, it would not be right to them to do anything that would deprive them of their share. Of course it won't make much, if any, difference to you or me, three or four hundred a year."

"I don't know about that," said her sister, reflectively. "Four hundred a year is a nice little sum to have all to oneself, to spend on dress. It would be our own, and our husbands could not object to the way in which we spent it."

"Do you think, then, that Captain Clinton will object to the way in which you will spend the allowance he is sure to make you?"

"No, I don't, and it would be all the same if he did. I have no intention of allowing Clifford to interfere with me in matters of that sort. Still, I think it is better for a wife to have something of her own. She needn't worry a man then for every penny she wants, asking him, perhaps, at the moment when he can least spare it. It makes her independent, too, to have the means to gratify any little whim or fancy she may have."

"Does it? I should not care to have it in that case. I like to owe all to Lionel's generosity," said Maggie, with tender warmth. "I've no doubt you do," rejoined Maud drily, "but then you are terribly in love with him, and he is hopelessly ditto with you, and he is an excessively rich man, able to gratify your every whim."

"Aren't you in love with your fiancé?" asked the young girl a little wistfully, remembering how well the hussar loved her cold, brilliant, clever sister.

"Well, yes, I suppose so," asserted the future Mrs. Clinton, with some hesitation. "At any rate, I am very fond of him. Love with me is a totally different affair to what it is with you."

"Is it?"

"Most certainly it is. It is a great passion with you; you lose yourself in it, whereas my head will never let my heart interfere with me too much. I shall never get out of my depths."

"No, I can quite believe that. Still, if getting out of your depths brings you the same great happiness that it has brought me, I should advise you to try and get out of it as soon as possible. No woman is really happy until she loves truly, devotedly, and is beloved in return."

"Perhaps so. And you are really very happy, Maggie? You ought to be. Every time I come here I am more impressed with the beauty of the place, and with the sense of your great good-luck;" and she looked round the dainty room, with its countless art-treasures, and then out at the stretch of park, and valley, and mountain, with a thrill of exaltation, at the thought that her sister was wife

to the man who was lord of all the treasures within, and all the broad acres without that lay around Molyneux Hall.

"Yes, I am happy—very happy. But for one thing, I might have my paradise on earth."

"And that one thing is—"

"The memory of Terence O'Hara!"

It was the first time the name had been mentioned between the sisters since Maggie's marriage, and while her cheeks paled to an ashy whiteness, Maud's flushed redly with a conscious blush.

For a time they sat in silence, and then at last her ladyship asked in a faltering voice, "Did—did—you—ever see—hear anything of him?"

"Yes," replied the other, with less composure than was usual to her, "he came—once to the Parsonage."

"And—and—what did he say? Was he very angry? Did you give him my message?"

"Yes, I told him you were very sorry."

"Did—did—he—forgive?"

Maggie asked the question with trembling lips, from which every vestige of colour had fled.

"Well, no. I don't think he actually forgave you. You could hardly expect that a man would at first."

"No, no, of course not at first. But will he, do you think? It would be such a weight off my mind if I knew that he had forgiven, and would bear no resentment."

"He may," said Maud, cautiously, not wishing to alarm her sister, who was already evidently very nervous, still feeling that she must give her some sort of warning, as it was possible she might meet O'Hara at some future time. "But his love for you was very great, consequently his disappointment when you married another man equally great. Time alone will soften the blow to him—make him think kindly of you."

"Then—then—he was very much—distressed about it—when you saw him?"

"Yes, very much."

"I can't understand why he took no notice of that letter you wrote him, telling him that I was going to be married," said Maggie, fixing her eyes wistfully on the cold, handsome face before her. "I thought, as he never wrote, that he was content to release me."

"I can't understand either," rejoined Maud, with a little constrained laugh, to hide her embarrassment. "Men are curious creatures though, there is no accounting at times for their actions."

"You gave him the ring?"

"Yes."

"What did he do with it?"

"Trampled it into the earth under his heel." "Oh!" ejaculated Maggie, clasping her hands over her heart, as if that were being trampled on, "he must have been angry."

"He was rather, I think."

"I shall never be able to understand his conduct," said her ladyship, after a pause, with a weary little sigh.

"Don't try to," cried Maud, quickly, rousing herself from the unpleasant reverie into which she was falling. "There are some puzzles to which there are no solutions—this is one of them. Don't trouble your head about him—banish all thought of him."

"I can't! I can't! the memory of him steals over and anon across me in happiest moments—stands always between me and perfect peace like a dark cloud."

"Only if you should ever have the misfortune to meet him be on your guard and keep him away from Sir Lionel, if possible. It is never a good plan to let an old lover and a new husband compare notes."

"You think I shall meet him?"

Maggie's violet eyes were widely distended and full of horror as she put the question.

"You may. The world, after all, is very small; we constantly meet the same people over and over again, in almost all quarters of the globe."

"Maud—Maud—what shall I do? I shall die of fright if we meet. He may tell Li

that I was engaged to him nearly all the time I let Lionel woo me, and I don't care to live if I lose my husband's love."

"Pooh! Don't distress yourself in that fashion. You are married now; his telling Li would do him no good. You could not become his wife. Have courage, and don't have a conscience. 'Conscience makes cowards,' &c., and all will be well."

"You really think so?"

"Yes, really. And don't look so white and scared. Here comes Eunice; she will wonder what is the matter with you."

"Good morning," said Miss Molyneux, entering through the French window. "I hope you are pleased to see me out so early?"

"Very pleased," said Maggie, faintly, with a wan smile, as she held out her hand.

"Good gracious, child, what is the matter with you. You look like a ghost?"

"She has a headache," suggested Miss Randal, with a swift side glance at her sister.

"I think she wants a walk to set her right."

"Is that all? Then she can come with me. I have to go to the Dover House with a message for Nance. Will you come? It is a lovely morning for a walk."

"I should like to, very much."

"By the way," rattled on her guest, "I just met Li, and he told me that you are going to town, and want me to accompany you."

"Yes. I hope you will be able to come; Maud can't."

"Thank, I shall be delighted. Mother is going to stay for a month or two with her old friend, Lady Royston, so I should have been all alone at the Rosary."

"That would have been very dull," chimed in Miss Randal.

"Very. I should have been almost tempted to ask you to let me join in your travels abroad."

There was a twinkle of merry mischief in Miss Molyneux's brown eyes, that showed she was only jesting, and they both laughed heartily.

"You will enjoy yourself more in London, I think."

"I think I shall," she acquiesced.

"I am so glad you will be able to come with us," remarked Maggie, as the three girls sat out on their way to the Dover House.

"So am I," rejoined Eunice.

"I was afraid you might be going to Royston Towers with your mother. I shouldn't care to go to town without some sort of a chaperon."

"That is rather a good idea," laughed the others. "You are married, and don't want to be chaperoned."

"Perhaps not, according to the law of society, but I want very much to be supported according to my own feelings. You will make me feel safe and secure."

Her poor little ladyship thought her sister-in-law would do that. She did not know, as fortunately we cannot look into the future, and see all the ills and troubles that are to come—that taking Eunice with her would bring about what she most dreaded—what she would have given her right hand to avoid—and what would entail on her days of weary pain—of ceaseless regret—of soul-bruising loneliness and sorrow.

But she did not know it, and so putting aside for a time the haunting fear that possessed her, she chattered gaily as they strolled along through the fresh, flower-enamelled meadow-grass, weighted with shining dew-drops, and the soft spring wind wooed the colour back to her pale cheeks, and the light to her dimmed eye, and made her look once more like the Maggie of old.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"AT LAST WE MEET AGAIN."

The curtain had risen on the first act of *Il Trovatore* at Her Majesty's, the singers were warbling their sweetest, when the entrance of two ladies, accompanied by several gentlemen to the royal box, made nearly all the fashionables

—and a great many who were not fashionable also—turn their eyes from the *prima donna* and scan the new arrivals.

One of the ladies was very dark, with an olive skin, pomegranate lips, and lustrous brown eyes. She wore a dress of crimson satin, toned down by costly black lace, which suited her stately beauty marvelously well; the other was fair, with corn-coloured hair, and violet eyes, and cheeks brilliant with the bloom of extreme youth. She was attired in a gown of magnificent white brocade, untinted by any colour, and the only ornament she wore was a necklace of flashing diamonds, with heavy pendant opals clasping her snowy throat. She was talking in a subdued tone to a handsome young fellow, who resembled her somewhat, inasmuch as that he had the same sunny-hued hair, the same dark-lashed eyes of an almost indefinable colour, now looking of a purplish blue, now darkening to black, and the same refined air of race and breeding about him that distinguished her.

He held her opera cloak when she unfastened it and threw it off, and gave her the great bouquet of stephanotis, camellias, and lilies, he had been carefully hearing, and finally seated himself beside her on one of the red chairs, the burning colour of which, with the draperies of the box, made a background that threw up in startling relief the blonde beauty of the two heads in such close juxtaposition.

"That is Lady Molyneux," the fashionables were whispering to each other, "the new beauty."

"Isn't she lovely?" said one.

"Very lovely. That is her brother with her," rapidly remarked a second. "Wonderful family likeness—"

"I beg your pardon, he is not her brother," interrupted a third.

"Who is he, then?" demanded Number Two.

"He is going to be married to her sister."

"No, he isn't," objected a fourth. "Captain Clinton is going to marry Miss Randal. That young fellow is his half-brother."

"Oh, I see. And who is the dark, foreign-looking man chatting with Sir Lionel?"

That is the Comte de Villeville. He is going, I believe, at some future time to marry Miss Molyneux."

"What! hasn't he married her yet?" inquired one, who had been on the Continent for some time.

"No."

"It's about time he did then. Why can't he make up his mind?"

"I think he has—did so long ago. It is the lady who hasn't, and won't now, I shrewdly suspect."

"Why?"

"Because she has a new admirer, and one whose fascinations are superior to the Comte's."

"Oh, indeed. Who, may that be?"

"The painter of 'Hopelien.'"

"Ah! then I don't wonder she is fascinated. He is an uncommonly handsome fellow, and that picture has made his reputation. He will be the rage."

"Quite so. Still I should be very sorry for a sister of mine to care for him. He has the reputation of being one of the fastest men about town. There is no folly too wild, too extravagant for him to indulge in, and he drinks! By Jove! I've seen men crack their bottles pretty freely in India, after a hard drill, take too much brandy punch habitually, and young fellows at a wine at college take more than was good for them, but I never saw anyone sit down and drink away steadily as he does, and never show the effect of it either. The only outward and visible sign is that that queer, devilish look in his eyes grows stronger—shows plainer."

"That's strange!"

"Yes, and it would make me feel uncomfortable, to no small degree, if I thought any girl I cared for was going to fall into his clutches!" and then the speakers turned their attention to the stage and gave up discussing their neighbours, and most of the audience did likewise, only here and there a *loggionista* remained levelled at the royal box.

Maggie was quite unconscious of the fire of glances directed at her; she was too inexperienced to understand it if she had noticed it, and would have probably thought that it was the right thing for well-bred people to stare at a new face in all public places in a most profane and unpleasant way; then she was interested in what Henriette Clinton was saying. He was telling her that Clifford would most likely get leave in the autumn, and come over to England to fetch Maud, and she felt as kindly towards the man who was to be her brother-in-law that she was always eager to hear news of him, and intently gave a warm welcome to his brother; and the young fellow, being anything but coquettish, despite his great personal beauty and having a love of his own far away in sunny Nice, whom he hoped to marry some day when he had made money enough to be able to indulge in the expensive luxury of a wife, was in no danger of losing his heart to the matchless attractions of Lady Molyneux, or of mistaking her kindly friendship for any other feeling.

So the two young people carried on their animated conversation in subdued tones, and paid little attention to the woe of Leonora and Matricio, for they had both seen the opera before; and Maggie, after one misadventure, had unconsciously adopted some of the habits of the blasé fashionables with whom she associated—only in society though. In the seclusion of her own home she was still as unaffected and natural as when Sir Lionel had married her nine months before; and she had improved. The gay, careless butterfly had become a tender, loving woman, devoted to and bound up in the honest, manly fellow whose deep unalterable affection was bringing out all that was best in her, purifying and refining a nature that was innately noble, and that had only been warped a little by the bad example of her elder sister.

While the two young people chatted, the Comte and Eunice flirted in a mild kind of way behind a huge fan she carried; he trying to regain the ground that somehow or other he knew he had lost, and she, with consummate tact, parrying his soft nothings, and gazing round the house under her long lashes in search of a face she had been looking for unsuccessfully for the past month, and which held a strange fascination for her.

Again and again she swept the house with a swift sideglance, and failed to see the man she sought, for the simple reason that he was hidden by the curtains of the box nearly opposite their own, through the filmy lace of which he watched the occupants of the royal box, or, to speak more correctly, one of the occupants of it, and that one was not Eunice.

No, it was on the young, lovely face of her sister-in-law that the blue eyes were fixed, with an eager intenseness that was half hate, half passion, tinged with unutterable regret. Long he sat and gazed at the exquisite, white-robed figure opposite him, with the fair head so daintily poised, and the snowy throat, with its collar of flashing gems, and the starry eyes that rivaled them in brightness; then suddenly, with a half-smothered sob, he dashed aside the curtains, and sat forward in the full blaze of the light which fell down on his haggard handsome face and weary chestnut beard, and weary, wicked, but withal beautiful eyes.

The curtain was down, young Clinton had gone to speak to some friends in the stalls, and as the man pushed aside the curtains Maggie looked round the house. Slowly her eyes travelled; slowly—slowly till they lighted on the face opposite, and rested there for the space of a second; then with a gasping sob—her head fell forward on to her breast, her nerveless limbs relaxed, and for a moment she seemed to lose consciousness, but recovering herself almost immediately, she flung the great bouquet to hide her ashy face and trembling lips, and looked across once more.

Yes, there was no mistake. There sat the man she dreaded and feared to see, looking much the same as of old, any casual observer would have said; only she, who knew him so well, saw the difference, and noted it with a keen

paug at heart. The gay *debonnair* look was gone, and in its place was one indefinable to her, yet she shuddered as she met the gaze of those blue eyes, cynical, cruel, pitiless, and turning, addressed some remark to Eunice.

Miss Molyneux did not answer; she was bowing and smiling to some one, and Maggie, following the direction of her eyes, saw with horror that it was their *vis-à-vis* she was recognizing.

"Mr. O'Hara," she said at last with some embarrassment, a rich colour glowing in her dark cheek, "the artist I told you about (she had never said a word about him to her sister-in-law, Kate having been the only one she favoured with her confidences). He is coming over; I shall be able to introduce him to you. Such a delightful man. Quite a celebrity. I am sure you will be glad to know him."

"Glad to know him!" It was simply with a sinking heart, in an agony of fear, that Lady Molyneux sat there, while as death, motionless as a marble figure, save for the hurried rise and fall of her breast, that alone showed the tumult within. Was it coming, the exposure she dreaded, which might part her from the husband she adored? Would he recognize her as an old friend, making it imperative for her to explain how and when she had known him—to tell all that she most wished to conceal, and lose at least the respect of the being who was dearest to her in the whole world?

There are some moments so full of anguish, so fraught with fear—deadly heart-numbing fear, that they seem like hours; and the few moments it took O'Hara to come round from one side of the house to the other seemed like hours to the pallid woman, who sat so still in her canopy of satin and diamonds. She felt dazed and crushed by the shock of the unexpected meeting; the lights danced before her eyes, the hum of voices around her sounded like distant thunder, but preternaturally distinct to her was the click of the lock as the box-door opened and admitted a man who a minute later was introduced to her by Eunice, and who bowed low, with ceremonious politeness, over the little gloved hand she extended mechanically, saying, as he did so, in a voice so soft that it only reached her ear, "At last we meet again," and who then turned to make the acquaintance of Sir Lionel.

Maggie watched the introduction fearfully, but nothing uncommon came of it. The two men shook hands, and the baronet said a few polite words to the artist just in the same way as he had to half a score of others who had come to the box that night, seeking introductions to the new beauty. Indeed, he was getting quite accustomed to seeing his wife introduced after, and prated, and admired. She had taken the fashionable world by storm, croaking a perfect furor with her exquisite face and exquisite gowns, which were fit settings for such a gem; so he, knowing nothing, saw nothing odd in the fact of O'Hara seating himself beside Eunice in a way that seemed to indicate that he intended to remain, but to his wife it seemed horrible that he should be there. It was evident, from the manner of his greeting, that he did not at present intend to let people know that they had been acquainted before, yet she knew his presence was dangerous, and she remembered Maud's warning: "Keep him away from Sir Lionel."

"Keep him away! How could she?" she wondered miserably. He was evidently the man who had fascinated Eunice, and, of course, during their stay in London they would be sure to meet him constantly. What could she do? She put the question to herself, and answered it hopelessly—nothing! She must wait and watch, and be on her guard, and wear out her heart with ceaseless anxiety, asking fear.

"How pale you look, Lady Molyneux? Can I get you anything?"

The Comte's voice broke across her train of unpleasant thoughts, and rousing herself with an effort she answered, quietly,—

"Not anything, thank you; it is only the heat."

"Would you like to take a turn in the

corridor?" asked the Frenchman, rather eagerly.

His place by his lady love's side had been taken by the fair-haired artist, whom he detested so cordially, and he was not inclined to stay and look on at another man making the running with the woman he wanted to win.

"No, thanks. I prefer remaining here," rejoined her ladyship, turning her attention to the stage, and pretending to be extremely interested in Leonora's trills and shakes; but she was painfully conscious that O'Hara's eyes were fixed furtively on her face, though he seemed to be paying assiduous attention to the woman at his side, and that he was studying her fixedly; and she felt that she would have been thankful if the earth had opened and swallowed her up, hiding her for ever from the gaze of those cruel, gleaming eyes.

And the man who gazed at her so intently! What were his feelings? Did he hate that beautiful face, so well remembered through the dreary, empty months that had passed since he last looked on it? Did he hate those eyes, those glorious violet eyes that in the old days had satisfied his cravings, and looked back love into his?

Did he hate the loveliness that belonged to another, that he would once have bartered his soul to possess? He hardly knew—he could not tell. His nature was so passionate, so fiery, it was but one step with him from love to hate; but he knew one thing, and that was that he hated with a mad, murderous passion the man who had won her from him—the man who had made a chasm yawn between them which naught but death, and death alone could bridge; the man who had the right to clasp her to his breast, and kiss those matchless lips, and bid her nestle to him and yield him a wife's love and obedience; the man who had laid waste his life, unknowingly, perhaps, yet, nevertheless, completely and utterly. Robbing it of all sunshine, leaving it blank, barren, and worthless.

"At last!" Maggie unconsciously echoed Terence's words as the curtain fell for the last time, and she was free to get up and escape from the steady glare of those dreadful eyes that seemed to look through and through her.

"Are you glad it is over, my love?" whispered Sir Lionel, as he wrapped her up tenderly in his mantle.

"A kettle," she answered. "It is so hot to-night."

"Yes, very. Why, child, how pale you are!" he exclaimed, as they stepped out into the corridor. "What is the matter?"

"Nothing," she answered, evasively, turning away her head. "I am only a little tired—a little overcome by the heat."

"Is that all really? I have never seen you look so white before."

"Of course not," she rejoined, with a miserable attempt at mirth. "I am getting a fashionable London complexion."

"Too much gaiety, eh!"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"If you are tired you won't care to go to Lady Limmer's crash to-night, will you?"

"Well, I would rather not," she said, a little eagerly, feeling a great longing come over her to get away from the crowd and the blaze of lights to the quiet of her own room; "but Eunice will be disappointed if I don't go to chaperon her."

"No, she won't be disappointed. There are Mrs. Trevor and her husband; I know they are going to the Limmers. I will ask them to give Eunice a seat in their carriage, and look after her, and you and I will go home together, like a pair of respectable married folk."

"Yes—yes, do try to get them to take her," cried Maggie, eagerly—so eagerly that her husband looked at her in some astonishment, for she had always hitherto been ready to go to every dance and dinner for which they had received invitations, and they had been pretty numerous.

"I am sure they will take her. You need

have no fear, and you must be tired to be so anxious to get home."

"I am," she acknowledged.

She was anxious to get home, and anxious to get away from the close proximity of Terence O'Hara, and it was with a genuine sigh of relief that she dropped back on the cushions of her carriage as it rolled away from Her Majesty's, and leant her head against her husband's shoulder, while O'Hara stood hat in hand staring after it for some time, and then suddenly he called a hansom and went off to the Limmers, and was so attentive to Miss Molyneux that the Comte was nowhere, and had to look on while Terence valed with her, and took her into supper, and sat with her in dim corners, and made himself generally agreeable to her and disagreeable to his rival, and finally persuaded Mrs. Trevor to let him occupy the vacant seat in her brougham, and escorted Miss Molyneux to the door of her brother's house.

"Did you have a nice dance last night?" inquired Maggie the next morning, when she and Eunice met at a rather late breakfast.

"Very nice," returned Miss Molyneux, enthusiastically. "I don't know when I enjoyed myself so much."

"Indeed! How was that?" inquired Sir Lionel, who was a bit of a tonic. "Did Villaflo dance with you alone?"

"By no means," returned his sister, promptly. "He only danced twice with me."

"How was it, then, that you managed to enjoy yourself so much?"

"Because I had good partners, I suppose, and because everything is so well done there. By-the-way," she continued, addressing Maggie, "Lady Limmer's musical at home is next Monday, and I promised faithfully to go and take you. She was very much disappointed at your non-appearance last evening."

"Was she? I am very sorry."

"Yes. Will you come on Monday?"

"I suppose if you want to go, my dear," assented Lady Molyneux, rather reluctantly.

"Tell me," she went on, a minute or two later, when Sir Lionel left the room, "was Mr. O'Hara there?"

"Yes," replied Eunice, with a slight accession of colour. "He goes everywhere. (This was pleasant news to the woman who wished to avoid him.) He is courted and caressed by everyone. That picture has made him famous."

"What picture?"

"Hopeless! Didn't you see it when you were at the Academy?"

"No; I didn't notice it."

"Then put on your hat and come with me, I never get tired of looking at it."

And without more ado Miss Molyneux carried Maggie off to the Academy to see the picture that had made Terence O'Hara famous.

It represented a desert island, on which had been shipwrecked a man and a woman, and the woman lay dead, with her head up on the shelving beach at the feet of the man, and part of her body in the surf, which broke over it and tossed the foam over the dark, sea-drenched dress.

The man stood with head slightly bent, gazing at what had been probably dearer to him than aught else in the world, and on his face was a look of passionate, hopeless sorrow, that absolutely startled the beholder.

There was such force and realism about it; it seemed like a living, despairing face looking out from the canvas, and that alone would have made it a remarkable picture without the delicacy of finish that was apparent in it, and the wonderful blending of colour.

Long Maggie looked at it. To her it was typical and significant, for she saw that the woman's face bore a strong resemblance to her own. It was just what she would be like, she reflected, if she lay dead, with all her golden hair drenched with spray falling about her in wild confusion, and her black-lashed lids shut, making a dusky line on her pale cheeks.

"Hopeless!" He, the man who had painted this realistic picture was hopeless, and she had



["AT LAST WE MEET AGAIN."]

made him so, and he was finding this outlet for his anguish.

With a sigh she turned away.

"Alas! how easily things go wrong."

"What do you think of it?" demanded Eunice.

"It is very powerful, but very painful. I should not care to look at it again."

"I should. I could spend whole days looking at it."

"I could not. I am almost sorry I have seen it at all. I shall not forget it for a long time."

And she did not. Before her mental vision would come the despairing face of the man and the pallid beauty of the woman, and the background, a wide waste of tumbling, glassy water, tinged to a blood-red hue by the rays of the setting sun, and never a mast or sail to break the monotonous stretch of surging sea.

CHAPTER XIX.

A SON AND HEIR.

"Do you feel well enough to go to-night, Maggie?"

"Quite well enough. I want to hear and see all the celebrities."

"Yes, still you must not overtax your strength now," said her husband tenderly, throwing his arm round her, and straining her with gentle force against his breast.

"I know," she answered, with a shy blush, hiding her face on his breast.

"You have looked so white and wan this last week, quite different from what you did when we came to town. I am afraid so much gaiety is not good for you."

"Perhaps not," she assented quietly. "Still you cannot expect me just now to look quite so blooming as usual, and I have been very good this last week. I have not been to a single entertainment."

"I know, dearest I don't wish to keep you from going if you think you are equal to it

It is only my anxiety about your health that makes me speak."

"I know, dear love," she said softly, looking up into the face that was all the world to her, "but I feel stronger to-day, and think I had better go."

"If you are strong enough, certainly," and he threw her cloak over her shoulder, and gave her his arm to the carriage, and away they drove to Lady Limmer's musical at home, where Maggie knew she would meet O'Hara.

Yet she dared not keep away. She felt that it would be a confession of weakness to avoid him, and Eunice had told her that he had inquired after her on two or three occasions during the past week when he had met her sister-in-law at parties. What could she do? She was powerless, and felt that while they stayed in London she must endure the torture of meeting him. She could not refuse every invitation.

"We must live our lives, though the sun be set, Must meet in the masque, where parts we play,

Must cross in the maze of life's minut.

She had a "part" to play "in the masque" of life, and braced herself to play it, but no one knew what it cost her to smile and chat, and mix in the gay throng, to set her face to the tune of a bolero, while all the time there was a funeral dirge droning at her heart. A deadly horrible fear was on her that her discarded lover would have his revenge, would separate her from the husband in whom her life was bound up, and it was with many an inward shudder that she entered Lady Limmer's brilliantly lighted rooms, leaning on Sir Lionel's arm.

A woman to be envied, thought many of the women present, as she swept along at the baronet's side—a slim, tall shape, in a dead white gown, which heightened the transparent pallor which had lately spread over her face, chasing away the bloom. She wore no adornments save a bunch of roses at her breast of the same snowy hue as her robe, and her

wonderful white beauty made all the other fair ones present look vulgar and pronounced. She seemed like a queen among them.

"Lady Molyneux looks very well to-night," whispered Terence to Eunice, who had dined with the Trevors and come with them.

"Do you think so? We have been quite concerned about her health during the last week."

"She looks delicate. I meant—she looks very beautiful."

"She always does, I think."

"Yea."

An involuntary sigh rose to his lips—what he had lost! The next moment he was smiling blandly, and declaring himself delighted to oblige his hostess and sing.

(To be continued.)

ATHLETIC exercises are daily coming more into favour with young Frenchmen, and the Paris "Footrace Club," lately founded, has just held a most successful meeting. The runners took the names of celebrated horses, and there was some capital racing.

ENGLISH handwriting is greatly admired by the New York ladies, who consider the angular Britanno calligraphy more fashionable than their own round American style. So "Hand-writing Clubs" have been formed, where the fair learners spend hours over their copy-books like small school-children.

A PLAIN STATEMENT.—In England, district visitors are not always welcome among the poor. One of them was recently inducted into her duties by an old woman after the following fashion: "You are the new district visitor, are you? Do you know what your duty is to me? I will just tell you. First you sits down, then you reads a very short psalm, then you gives me a shilling, and then you may go."



["IS THERE ANYTHING THE MATTER?" SAID NELL, AS SIR ADRIAN APPEARED.]

NOVELLETTE.]

NELL'S MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER III.

NELL'S MARRIAGE.

BUT the honeymoon passed more swiftly than she had expected, and looking back she was forced to own she had enjoyed it. Six weeks of travelling amid beautiful scenery, with every luxury wealth could purchase at command, was a great change for the little recluse of the red-brick house. Then Sir Adrian was an admirable cicerone—he knew just what was best to see and how to see it; he liked Nell's naive enjoyment of fresh scenes, and devoted himself thoroughly to her amusement.

They never loved each other, these two. If Sir Adrian were busy he shut himself up in his own room; if he had letters to write he ordered the carriage for his wife, and sent her for a drive without him. They never quarrelled, they were always polite and pleasant to each other, but they were not in the least like husband and wife. There was a great restraint in their intercourse, their manner never grew familiar; after six weeks of marriage their lips had never met, and neither had ever addressed to the other a word the whole world might not have heard. They were more like two strangers thrown unexpectedly together, and while agreeable and sociable for the time made no attempt at intimacy.

Their servants were more perplexed than they had ever been in their lives. James, who had attended Sir Adrian for fourteen years, who knew the whole story of his first marriage, had been not a little anxious to see the new Lady Carruthers. One look at her face, and he was content. He thought his master had found happiness enough now to forget the past; and hearing from Mary, once one of Nell's Sunday-school children, now promoted

to the dignity of waiting-maid, nothing but praise of her lady, he was amazed to notice the gulf between the wedded pair—the gulf which neither attempted to bridge over. If the opinion of these two retainers could have been taken it was largely in favour of their lady.

"Sir Adrian didn't ought to marry her if he couldn't forget the past," decided James.

"My lady's much too sweet and gentle ever to have disappointed him," returned Mary, "and if he couldn't forget his first wife he ought never to have taken another, and that's my opinion, Mr. Smith, and I can't help saying it."

The soldier servant shook his head.

"Things'll come right maybe when they get home—anyway, they make a handsome couple. It'll be hard if their hearts don't turn to each other in time."

And now on a fine October evening Sir Adrian sat talking to his wife.

"I have been thinking, Helen, I should like to return to England. It is getting cold for travelling, and I think we shall be more comfortable at home."

"Just as you please," replied Lady Carruthers.

"Have you no choice?"

"I think I should like to go to England."

"That's right—shall we say next week?"

"That will suit me very well."

"You might write and ask one or two of your sisters to go to the Court to meet you."

She shook her head.

"I had rather be settled there myself before I receive visitors."

"I shouldn't have thought you would have stood on such ceremony with your sisters."

She turned away her face to hide her tears. Not for worlds would Helen Carruthers have had her husband guess her secret.

Alas! alas! the love she had thought it not in her nature to feel had come at last. She almost worshipped the man who with his own

lips had told her he was incapable of loving her.

Well, at least she was his wife. She could see him often, but to see him and feel his indifference was a very doubtful happiness. One pang at least she would spare herself—the sisters who had thought so much of her grand marriage should never guess her secret, even if they deemed her forgetful and unkind.

She would invite none of the inhabitants of the red-brick house to Carruthers Court; they should not see, they must never guess, the terms on which she stood with her husband.

"You must begin your packing soon, Mary," she told her maid. "We are going to England next week."

"Going home, my lady, I am so glad."

"Not home," corrected her ladyship, thinking the girl meant Smokington, "to Carruthers Court."

"That's what I meant, miss—I mean my lady. Mr. Smith has told me so much about the Court that I'm quite longing to be there."

"Mr. Smith" was the valet. James was thirty-three, Mary eighteen, and they were on the best of terms.

Lady Carruthers sighed. Her maid had fared better than herself. No one had told her of the glories of the Court.

"James has been there then?"

"Oh, yes, my lady; he was there once nearly a year, and he has been there since. He says it is just like fairyland—the loveliest place he ever was in."

"Has he said anything to you about Master Carruthers?"

Mary shook her head.

"If it hadn't been you told me so yourself, my lady, I'd never have known there was a little boy."

Nell turned away with a sigh. She thought Sir Adrian a most indifferent father. Six weeks married he had never yet spoken of his child. She absolutely knew as little of

her stepson as on the day she first heard of his existence.

They travelled as fast as steam and horses would take them, and at the close of a lovely autumn day they found themselves at Rockville, the nearest station to the Court.

Sir Adrian looked graver than was his wont. His wife longed to put her hand into his and try to cheer him, but she restrained. There was nothing she dreaded so much as his discovering her secret.

She grew colder to him day by day, just because she was so afraid he might find out he was dearer to her than ought on earth.

An open carriage was waiting, drawn by dashing bays. A light cart was there for the luggage and the accommodation of James and Mary. The coachman and footman looked with respectful interest on their lady.

"A sweet child," murmured the old coachman to himself, "but she's a sweet way with her—very different from the last lady."

Sir Adrian placed his wife in the carriage, and covered her with the fur rug. He noticed that as he did so she drew her hand rapidly away, as though to avoid all contact with his fingers, but he said nothing, only gave the word of command to the footman.

"Home."

Nell sat like a creature in a dream. She had known her husband to be a rich man, but she had never realized the extent of his wealth before.

At every cottage women stood gazing, at every turn of the road troops of people raised a cheer for Sir Adrian and Lady Carruthers.

She felt her eyes swim with tears. How happy she might have been in her married life if only love had been included in the contract.

"How fond they seem of you," she whispered, shyly.

"Yes, I think they are. I have not lived among them for more than six years, but I have been backwards and forwards pretty often, and every one of my tenants knows any complaint addressed to me will find as much attention as though I never left the Court. I haven't done much to win their affection, but I have won it."

"Love given untought is best," quoth his wife, and then the carriage dashed through the lodge gates, and they were driving up a splendid avenue of chestnuts to the Court.

Sir Adrian bent forward.

"I hope you will be happy, Nell. Remember, this is our home."

Of late he had almost ceased to call her Nell, substituting the more formal Helen. His words touched her to the quick.

"I will try to be all you wish. I do hope you won't be sorry, Adrian."

Six weeks' wife though she was, that name still left her lips with a shadow of hesitation.

"Sorry for what?"

"That you brought me here."

He shook his head.

"I am quite content, Nell."

"Are you?"

"Aye, I would not change things if I could. You may not be very near me, child. We may not be what the world calls a model couple, but I am satisfied. Do you know, Nell, when I made up my mind to marry you?"

"No."

"Shall I tell you?"

"Yes."

"That afternoon at Stokington, when I met you comforting that sobbing child. I thought you looked like an angel then, and I wanted you for the good angel of my house."

"It was very good of you to trust me."

He smiled.

"I don't think many people would say so. Do you know, Nell, you will be a beautiful day, and people will tell you you might have done much better."

She shook her head.

"I don't want to do better."

The carriage had stopped now before the grand entrance, and Sir Adrian alighted and led his wife into the hall, where all the servants had assembled in her honour.

The housekeeper and butler stood first. To them, in a few well-chosen words he presented his wife. The old couple, who had served the family from their youth, thought they had never seen a sweeter face than that of their new mistress.

"Will you show Lady Carruthers to her room, Pierce," said the Baronet, kindly. "I suppose mine are in the old quarter?"

"Yes, Sir Adrian, and I ordered dinner for eight, not being sure of the hour of your arrival."

She ushered the bride into a suite of beautiful apartments, furnished in pale blue. A bright fire burned in the dressing-room grate, and Nell sank into a chair. She was feeling as if she must break down. She dreaded the sight of tears.

"I hope you like these rooms, my lady. The matter was very particular about them. He sent for the papers from Paris. These rooms have always been favourites with the Ladies Carruthers. Sir Adrian's are in the other wing."

Nell hesitated.

"These are very beautiful. I like them exceedingly. Did the late—I mean did Sir Adrian's first wife use them?"

Mrs. Pierce shook her head.

"Her ladyship objected to them. She said the sunshine came in too brightly. She had rooms in the west wing."

And of course her husband used them still. This was the verdict of Nell's thoughts, but perhaps Mrs. Pierce guessed the girl's feelings, and explained purposely.

"The rooms in the west wing were made into nurseries later on. Sir Adrian disliked noise, and so it seemed best to make them there as far from him as they could be."

Nell's face cleared. This kind old woman understood her young mistress already. She added, a little diffidently.

"I wished Master Carruthers to be brought down to greet you, my lady, but I couldn't manage it. His nurse absolutely refused. She has long rebelled against my authority. Times out of number I've meant to ask the master to send her away, but she doesn't like to speak against her, feeling she nursed the child's mother before him."

Nell sighed, then she turned to the old housekeeper with a cheering smile.

"Do you mean the child has been taught to hate me? I know in story books stepmothers are made dreadful, but I have little sisters of my own, not much older than Tom. And I—"

She broke down, the tears which had been so long trembling on her eyes found vent.

Poor Mrs. Rivers was overwhelmed with remorse.

"I shall never forgive myself, my lady, for making you shed tears before you'd been an hour in the house. I didn't mean any harm, only Mrs. Bates and I never have agreed about the management of Master Tom. You see I've been in the family for years, and my mother before me, and it did seem hard the care of the master's child should be left to a stranger."

"Perhaps it was his mother's wish."

"I don't think so, my lady."

"She may have told Sir Adrian so when he was dying. The wishes of the dead are very sacred."

"She wouldn't have tied him, my lady. I don't think Lady Carruthers ever spoke after they brought her home."

Nell looked surprised.

"I always thought that she died at the boy's birth."

"Oh no! Master Tom was three months old when his mamma was taken. It was an accident, my lady. She went out riding full of life and strength—she was brought back a senseless heap. She lingered a few hours, but she never spoke again. She was dead before the master got here, though we sent for him directly."

Mary and the luggage had arrived, but Mrs. Pierce sent the girl away, and would let no one but herself wait on her lady this first evening

of her home-coming. The old woman was no unskilful tirewoman. She dressed Nell in white silk and fastened forget-me-nots at her throat, and in the coils of her bright hair, then she surveyed her work with unmistakable satisfaction.

"It is a happy day for us that sees you here, my lady," she said, respectfully. "Can I do nothing else for you?"

"Yes," said Lady Carruthers, quietly: "you can show me the way to the nurseries."

Mrs. Pierce hesitated.

"You need not be afraid," said Nell, gently. "I shall know it is not the poor child's fault if he has been prejudiced against me, and I would rather get over the first meeting without my husband, if it be as you fear. I am sure he would be grieved."

She stood there with her soft white draperies floating round her, her neck and arms bare, jewels on her throat and wrists. She was quite changed from the little Nell who had made the sunshine of the old red-brick house, but yet she had a new charm about her. Mrs. Pierce no longer demurred, but conducted her ladyship through long corridors and winding passages, until they came to a large airy apartment, which at first sight seemed empty.

Lady Carruthers entered, Pierce remaining outside, mounting guard, as it were, upon her lady. Nell's first idea was that the nurse must be at supper and the child in bed. She saw no sign of human being in the spacious room. Then she listened and heard a faint sound like that of suppressed sobbing. Pushing open a door at one end of the room she came on a scene which made her heart ache. A little child sat on a high chair by the window; there was that sad precocious look on his face, not uncommon to only children, and he was sobbing bitterly; but it was not that which aroused his stepmother's indignation. The little hands were bound together tightly, so tightly that the coarse whipcord was cutting the delicate flesh; his feet were tied together in like fashion, and a cord round his waist attached him to his chair. Nell was almost speechless with horror.

She knelt down before the child and tried to undo the knots with her own thin white fingers.

"Are you an angel?"

She smiled through her tears.

"No dear. What are you doing here? Who tied you like this?"

"Bates."

"Your nurse?"

"Yes," then bending down his pretty curling head, he asked in a whisper: "Can you keep secrets?"

"Yes," said Nell. "Tom, I will keep all the secrets you tell me."

"I hate Bates."

"Hush dear, you mustn't say that."

"But I do. She keeps me shut up here. There's a nice old woman downstairs who'd be very kind to me, only Bates won't let her."

"Where is Bates?"

"She's gone out."

"Gone out!"

"Yes. She told me not to tell. She was a long time ago, and tied me here. She said she'd be back to put me to bed."

"But do you never see anyone but Bates?"

"Not often. She frightens them, so they keep away. My father's coming home to-night."

But the child uttered the news in no joyous tone. One would have said he was even more afraid of his father than of Bates.

"Aren't you glad?"

"No."

"Don't you love him?"

"No."

Nell's arms tightened round the child.

"You ought to love him, Tom."

"I don't. He gave me to Bates, she said so, and she's cruel to me. She beats whenever she's cross. Look there!"

There was a purple mark on the child's arm which made Nell's heart ache. She had often amused herself by thinking of her meeting with

her stepson, but she had never thought of it like this.

"Papa never stays here long," went on Tom, who seemed a communicative child, "and he never comes to see me."

"He will come now, Tom."

"No, he won't. Bates says I've got a step-mother who will make him hate me. What is a step-mother, please?"

Nell kissed him.

"I like you to do that," said the boy. "No one ever did before. Pretty lady, where did you come from? Did the angels send you?"

"I think they must have. Tom, will you promise to love me?"

Tom shook his head.

"Bates will send you away."

"I don't think so. I have come to live with you always, Tom. No one can send me away."

She had made the best knot now. Her fingers were still aching from the work, but she checked the child in her arms and carried him to the door, where the old housekeeper still stood.

"Is only wants five minutes to eight, my lady. The master has gone down."

The child clung to Lady Carruthers, and as up a shout as she tried to remove him from her arms.

"Listen, Tom," she said, in the sweet, low voice which was her charm; "be good, and stay with Mrs. Pierce, and I promise you I will come back to you soon."

The housekeeper looked dismayed. Nell almost passed the boy into her arms.

"Take care of him and bring him into dinner," she commanded. "I must go now. Oh, Pierce, there have been cruel doings here."

Sir Adrian gazed at his wife in amazement. Two pink spots burnt in her cheeks, and her blue eyes blazed with indignation. He could not see the cause of the change while the servants were in the room, but when the Baronet appeared and they withdrew he inquired—

"What is the matter, Nell?"

"Will you please ring the bell, Sir Adrian. Ring twice."

He obeyed her. It was the signal expected by Mrs. Pierce. The door opened, a footman announced Master Carruthers, and Tom entered, his golden hair several shades smoother, and his little rosy face brightening into a smile as he caught sight of his pretty lady.

Nell held out her hand, and took the child on her lap. Those pink spots faded out of her cheeks as she bent to caress him.

"So you have made friends?" said Sir Adrian, approvingly. "Nell, what a way you have with children. He really is a very pretty little fellow."

He had risen from his seat and stood looking at his wife and child. Nell silently pushed back the little black velvet sleeve and showed the cruel purple blotches, the open cuts in the delicate skin.

Sir Adrian started in horror.

"What does it mean?"

"It means that I found him a prisoner bound hand and foot to a chair, while his nurse was abroad seeking her pleasure."

"Nell."

"Don't look like that!" and her voice softened. "I dare say you never suspected it; but what could you have been dreaming of to give up the child body and soul to that woman?"

"She had been with his mother for years. She—" she stopped. A look of abject terror was on the boy's face.

Bates had returned considerably the worse for her friend's hospitality. Finding the child gone, she had boldly entered the dining-room in search of him.

One look at the child's terrified look before he buried his head on Nell's breast, one glance at the victim's passionate inflamed face and reckless manner, and Sir Adrian knew the truth. Standing so as to shut off his fair young wife from the sight of the delinquent, he rang

the bell. His orders to the footman were brief and to the purpose.

"Tell the housekeeper to pay that woman her wages and see her off the premises. She is not to sleep another night at Carruthers Court."

By brute force Bates was removed, still struggling and uttering threats. Lady Carruthers rose soon after to retire to the drawing-room.

"Let me carry him. He is too heavy for you, Nell."

But the child objected to the change, and clung to his step-mother. He wept from his father in almost as much terror as he had done from Bates, as Sir Adrian could only stand motionless and held open the door for his wife to pass through it with the boy in her arms. It dawned on the Baronet that, though he did not love her, the room looked but black and cold after her departure. Something had gone from it that had been before. He sat for some time over his wine, though he drank but little; then he pushed his glass aside and muttered—

"Bah! I am haunted by a ghost, the ghost of what might have been. Did she not herself tell me that she had no faith in love, that she meant to live out her life without it?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE time passed on. Sir Adrian and his wife settled down at the Court, neighbours came from far and near to make acquaintance with the bride. There was but one verdict. Lady Carruthers was an acquisition to the county; everyone agreed there had never been a mistress of the Court so fair and graceful as Sir Adrian's sweet girl-wife.

Many a one ventured to say as much in friendly congratulation to the baronet; many voices told him his wife would be the beauty of the London season, and he listened to the compliments with a smiling face, never by word or look betraying the guilt which yawned between himself and him.

Things had not turned out as he had planned. When he proposed to Helen Pemberton he had fancied he was doing a very prudent thing. She was sensible, domesticated, and would rule his household discreetly, entertain his guests, and be a mother to his child. He had told himself that was all he desired; that easy, friendly terms were the only intercourse he could hold with a wife. And now, in the early winter days, he found he had made a great mistake.

Nell was all he had thought of; she performed the rôle he had marked out for her most admirably, but between himself and her there was a great gulf which seemed to widen day by day.

She listened to his plans, deferred to his opinion, studied his comfort, but she never attempted to overstep the line he had suggested. When there were no visitors, when they were alone, she went her own way and lived her own life; it seemed complete enough without Sir Adrian.

It was in the middle of December that the baronet received a letter which pleased him exceedingly; he wanted someone to sympathize with his pleasure and he went in quest of his wife. As a rule, they never met in the morning; from breakfast to luncheon they passed their own vacations; actually Sir Adrian was not particularly sure where he should find his wife.

He met the old housekeeper in the gallery, and asked her if Lady Carruthers was at home.

"My lady is in her boudoir, Sir Adrian."

It came on him with a pang that in the six weeks they had been at the Court he had never once entered his wife's room. The hand with which he knocked at the boudoir was a trifle unsteady.

"Come in!"

It was a pretty scene on which he entered. Nell sat in a low chair by the fire, some pretty trifle of needlework on her lap. Tom was on a stool at her feet, absorbed in intent contem-

plation of a picture book; both he and his step-mother started at Sir Adrian's approach.

"Is there anything the matter?"

"Nothing at all!" rather crossly. "Surely a man may come to speak to his wife without her thinking of calamity!"

Nell saw he was put out, and wondered what could have annoyed him.

"Won't you sit down?" she said, gently. "Isn't this a pretty room? I don't think I have ever told you how much I like it?"

"And you spend your mornings here?"

"Yes, sometimes."

"Only when we go out," put in Tom, gravely. "Mother and I goes out every morning when it's fine."

Sir Adrian looked up almost as much astonished as if a parrot had spoken; probably it was the first time his son and heir had ever volunteered a statement in his presence.

"Oh, you're there," said his father, patting his head rather awkwardly. "Run away to your nurse now, Tom, I want to talk to—"

here he came to a dead stop, and only added, after an ardent pause, "your mamma."

Tom rose reluctantly.

"I haven't got a nurse," he said, very decidedly, "and I always sit here, always, but I'll go and wait outside till you have finished," and then, with a very aggrieved face, he disappeared, holding his beloved book carefully in both hands.

Sir Adrian's first speech was a reproof; he was generally a very good temper, but he certainly seemed exceptionally irritable this morning.

"Do you know you make a perfect slave of yourself to that child? It's perfectly absurd; I am very much annoyed, Helen."

Nell looked troubled.

"I thought you would have been glad he has taken to me so well," she said, in a disappointed tone.

"Taken to you! He seems to have taken possession of you entirely. I can never get any of your time and attention."

"I am very sorry, Adrian. Did you want letters written, or anything?"

"I wanted you," he said, discontentedly.

"You never seem to understand when a man has a wife he likes her society."

"I don't think I ever thought my society could add to your comfort."

"I wish you wouldn't keep harping about my comfort. I am not an old man or feigning."

She laughed, she really couldn't help it. At this unlucky moment Master Tom returned, but his father ordered him off in such a very peremptory fashion that the child departed with tears trembling in his eyes.

"You must make different arrangements," said Sir Adrian, quickly. "I won't have your time taken up like this. If you were a nursery governess that child couldn't consider you more his own property."

"I thought you brought me here for that purpose?"

"I never thought of such a thing."

"I am sorry I have disappointed you."

"I never said you had. I really wanted to talk to you. I have just heard from Niel Bistram, my first cousin; he's on his way to England, and may be here any day. We have been like brothers all our life, and I want you to make him welcome."

"Of course, I will."

"And remember, Nell, he's as poor as a church mouse, and he's taken all kinds of ideas that now I'm married he won't be welcome here, and I want you to make him feel that whenever he is in England the Court must be his home."

"I will do my very best."

"Of course, he will stay for Christmas. Don't you think the doctor and two or three of your sisters would come to us for that time?"

She shook her head.

"I am sure they only want a little persuasion. Now, once for all, Nell, why don't you use it? Surely you don't think so badly of

me as to believe I would not welcome them as warmly as you yourself would do?"

Nell played with her rings.

"I am sure you would."

"Then, why don't you ask them? I am quite sure you have not done so. Lily certainly would not require much pressing."

"I don't think I want them, Adrian."

Sir Adrian stared.

"Not want them! Are you dreaming, Helen?"

"No!" there was a kind of choked sob in his wife's voice; "but I think it would make me homesick. I might get a longing on me for Smokington, and the old red-brick house."

Sir Adrian looked at her critically.

"Have it your own way," he said, coldly.

"I did think you loved your own family, but it seems I was mistaken. I think, sometimes, Helen, you are a perfect icicle, that you have no affection in your nature."

"I think I told you so."

She was deeply displeased, and walked off.

He did not dine at home that night, and in the morning a message came that he had started for London, to meet Mr. Atherstone.

Nell sighed; her marriage did not seem turning out a great success, but she devoted the morning to Tom, and even promoted him to dining with her at lunch time. The child was her great solace; she often thought but for him her heart would have broken. She had never engaged another nurse in Mrs. Bates's place. Mary and the old housekeeper shared the care of Master Carruthers; and, indeed, he was so much with his step-mother he needed little attendance.

The two were sitting cosily in the boudoir that afternoon when a card was brought to Helen, inscribed Niel Atherstone. Her first thought was her husband's disappointment at having missed his cousin, her second to hurry to greet the new comer.

Niel Atherstone was an artist, a Bohemian by fate and choice. He and Adrian Carruthers were more to each other than many brothers, and few things had puzzled him more than reading in the *Times* the announcement of the baronet's second marriage.

He could hear no particulars of the match, and this, coupled with Sir Adrian's silence, made him fancy his new cousin would not be an acquisition, but he could not resist the baronet's warm invitation to the Court. He sat in the drawing-room for nearly five minutes, then the door opened and a young girl entered, looking almost a child in her heavy velvet dress; she came forward with outstretched hand.

"My husband will be so sorry. He went to London to-day on purpose to meet you."

Niel looked surprised.

"Then you are Lady Carruthers!"

"Yes, and as such you must let me welcome you to the Court; indeed, I hope you will stay with us as long as you can. Adrian has so been looking forward to your coming."

"Take care, Lady Carruthers, I may be quartering myself on you for an unheard-of period. I am a homeless bachelor, you know."

She smiled.

"Would you like to go to your own rooms or will you have tea, unless you are like Adrian, and despise such frivolities?"

"I fancy I am a more inveterate tea-drinker than most ladies. I will certainly accept your invitation."

She rose.

"I never sit here, the room seems too large and cold. I think if you will come with me we shall find tea all ready."

They did, and Master Carruthers mounting guard over it. Nell looked a little troubled. Tom and Mr. Atherstone seemed to have conflicting claims on her, but Niel relieved her by taking the boy on his knee and making friends with him. Nell breathed a sigh of content.

"Then you don't dislike children. I am so glad."

"I am awfully fond of them. Has Adrian described me to you as a savage?"

"Oh! no, but I was afraid you might object to Tom's being here, and you see—" she broke off suddenly.

"I don't see anything except that Tom seems very much at home in your boudoir. I wonder you were not afraid of being a step-mother, Lady Carruthers."

"Why?"

"You look so young."

"Oh! I am getting quite old now. I was one-and-twenty last week."

"And I was seven," chimed in Tom;

"mother and I kept our birthdays together. We had a lovely cake."

Mr. Atherstone smiled.

"You can't think how glad I am to see Adrian's happiness," he said gently to Helen.

"I have known him all my life; in fact, he has been my good genius, and I am so thankful that he has found consolation for all his troubles."

To his surprise the tears shone in Lady Carruthers' dark eyes.

"You must not think he forgets the past," she said gravely.

"I suppose no one could do that."

"Was she so very beautiful?"

"Who?"

She glanced at Tom.

"His mother."

"She was a very handsome woman, and she made up her mind to be Lady Carruthers, and she succeeded."

"I don't understand," said Nell huskily, "you speak as if you did not like her."

"I detested her."

Her amazement made him explain.

"Surely you have heard the story?"

"I heard that she died when he," indicating the boy, "was a baby. I thought she must have been very lovely, because Sir Adrian mourned her so long."

"More than six years! But I doubt the mourning. I believe, Lady Carruthers, that her death was a real relief to Adrian, that she poisoned his life."

A great rush of content came to Nell. Could it really be so? Was her husband's heart really not buried with the dead.

"It was a hasty marriage," went on Mr. Atherstone, "and before a month I believe he bitterly repented it. It turned out that she had been engaged to someone else, that she threw over the other man—whom she really loved—for Adrian's wealth. It was a pitiful history."

Nell's eyes wandered to the child. Niel reassured her.

No, he is a true Carruthers; he has not a feature of his mother's."

"Did you know her?"

"Yes. She objected to me because I wasn't grand enough. I hope you understand. I'm a shocking detrimental, Lady Carruthers."

Nell laughed.

"We were awfully poor at home," she said simply, "when Sir Adrian came to see us in the summer. I was thinking of going out as a governess. I think I consulted him about finding a situation."

"Well, he found one better suited to you. When will he be home?"

"I don't know."

"Didn't he say?"

She blushed crimson.

"I did not see him this morning."

They spent a pleasant hour. Tom fast grew intimate with his new cousin. The twilight came, and Nell opened the piano and sang sweet simple ballads. It dawned on Niel that Sir Adrian ought to be rarely happy with this fair, gentle wife.

"We dine at seven," she told him when the servant brought in the lamp, and then before he could answer a maid came in search of Tom.

"Doesn't he appear at dessert?" asked Mr. Atherstone, when the boy had bid good-night and vanished.

"Oh! no. Adrian does not like it."

"Perhaps he wants you all to himself."

Nell shook her head.

"You musn't make mistakes about us, please," she said, a little nervously; "we are not in the least what people call a sentimental couple."

The remark set Mr. Atherstone thinking, but he had not time for words. A loud summons at the grand entrance proclaimed Sir Adrian's return.

"I am sure you will excuse me," said Nell, abruptly. "I must go and dress. If you will find your way to Adrian's rooms he will be delighted."

Very warm was the greeting of the two cousins.

"I am awfully sorry I missed you," cried Sir Adrian; "you must have had a miserable reception."

"I had a charming one. I have been making acquaintance with your wife and son."

He was surprised at Adrian's impatient rejoinder.

"I really wish I could make Lady Carruthers understand that boy is not the first object in life to other people."

"Don't you like her devotion to him. I thought it the prettiest sight I had ever seen."

"I don't like him spoilt."

"She looks a child herself, Adrian," and his voice grew grave; "I must congratulate you. I am sure you have found happiness at last."

"Then you admire my wife?"

This remark amazed the artist.

"I think her very lovely."

"Lovely as a marble statue—and as cold."

Dinner passed off pleasantly, the stiff tête-à-tête repast became quite a social meal through the presence of a third person. Lady Carruthers looked more beautiful than ever in her tasteful evening dress, but Niel noticed that her blue eyes never sought her husband's face, never once did she speak his name. And when he had been two or three days at the Court he knew that Sir Adrian's wife was an unhappy woman, despite her fair face and gentle smile; he knew she had a secret grief, and when he saw how his cousin neglected her his blood boiled. For Sir Adrian never studied his wife's pleasure, never sought her company, he devoted himself heart and soul to his guest, but he entirely neglected his wife. Save at meals he rarely saw her, and then their intercourse was of the most formal character.

Niel's heart ached sometimes as he looked at the sweet face which, to his mind, grew thinner and sadder day by day. He had never had a difference with his cousin, but he was indignant with him for his treatment of Nell.

"I can't think how you came to marry," he said, bluntly, one day, when Lady Carruthers had left the room, with heightened colour, after some cutting remark of her husband about Tom. The child was his favourite vent for his feelings when put out. He would not have owned it for the world, but he was passionately jealous. He had learned to love his wife with every fibre of his nature, and he could not bear to see the boy's hold over the heart he could not touch.

"Men do a great many foolish things."

"Granted; but this might have been a wise one. Your wife is fair enough and sweet enough to make the sunshine of any home. You seem to find your only pleasure in tormenting her."

"Nonsense."

But Niel was a plain speaker.

"I don't understand how you ever came to marry her, but I am quite sure she has done nothing to disappoint you, and yet you treat her"—he paused for want of a simile—"as no sister of mine should be treated by any man, were he ten times her husband."

"Helen has two or three brothers of her own," remarked Sir Adrian, coldly. "One of them dined here a few weeks ago; he didn't find fault with my conduct."

"More shame for him."

"Don't let's quarrel, Niel; no woman's worth it, old fellow."

"I shan't quarrel; but, Adrian, I'd never have believed it of you; you have disappointed me."

"It's a pity you didn't return to England a few months sooner," said Sir Adrian, bitterly, "and go to Smokington instead of me; you might then have spared Helen such an uncongenial husband."

Nell's dusky cheek coloured with a deeper flush.

"I think you're beside yourself, but I don't care for your taunts. I don't suppose I shall ever marry; but, if I do, I only pray my wife may be as fair and true as yours."

It was afternoon when this conversation took place. There had been some talk of a ride, but the weather looked doubtful, so the cousins played billiards instead. It was well they had stayed indoors, for the snow came down in large flakes soon after they began their game, and, when it was finished, the ground was covered a few inches.

"I never saw such a storm," said Adrian, "it's a good thing we didn't start."

"Yes; I pity any one out in this downpour. And how suddenly it came on."

They played another game; by this time it was getting dark. Nell suggested an adjournment to the smoking-room. Sir Adrian caught at it, but as they turned to go they came upon Tom's small figure curled up in one of the window seats, with his little face flattened eagerly against the pane.

"You can't see much for snow, Tom," said Nell, good-naturedly.

Mrs. Pierce said I might come here," replied Tom; "I got so frightened I couldn't stay upstairs."

"Frightened? What have you got to be afraid of?" demanded his father, thinking, suddenly, how strange it seemed to him to see the child without Nell at his side.

"The snow, papa, it's so deep."

"The snow can't hurt you, boy?"

"But it'll hurt mother."

The two men started. Was Tom thinking of his dead mother? Had some pathetic idea of the snow falling over her grave come to the boy's brain, or did he mean Nell?

"I wanted to go and look for her," said Tom, dolefully, putting his small hand affectionately into Nell's; "but she made me promise not to go out, 'cause I've got a cold."

"Do you mean your mother is not in the house?" cried Sir Adrian, anxiously.

"She went out a long while ago, a very long time," continued Tom, "I've been watching for her till I'm tired."

Sir Adrian rang the bell furiously.

"Send Lady Carruthers's maid to me."

But the maid bore out Master Tom's testimony. Her ladyship had gone to read to a poor girl in the village, she often went there; no doubt she had started before the snow.

"Where is it?"

Mary described the cottage. Sir Adrian whistled.

"It's a bad enough walk any day, but tonight it will be terrible."

"You are not going out?" asked Nell, as he saw his cousin take up a Scotch plaid and adjust it round his shoulders.

"I am going to find my wife. Don't look so amazed, Nell; we may not strike you as a particularly attached couple, but I shall certainly not allow Lady Carruthers to be out alone in such a storm."

"Let me come with you."

"I had rather go alone. If you're in a charitable mood you might talk to the boy," said Sir Adrian, with unusual kindness. Here, Tom, take care of your cousin till I come back."

He had walked two miles in the blinding snow before he found any trace of his wife; then, in the distance, he saw her slight figure crouching down beneath an overhanging ledge, as though to obtain shelter from the storm. Another moment, and he was at her side.

"Nell!"

She started.

"Oh! why did you trouble to come? I am so sorry. Who told you?"

"Are you bent on killing yourself?" he

asked, hotly. "Nell, why will you do such things?"

"I didn't think it would be wet."

"And you are sitting down on your wet things."

"I couldn't help it, Adrian, I believe I have sprained my foot; I can't walk a step."

For the first time in all their married life Sir Adrian put his arm round her waist; she could hear his heart beating wildly.

"Nell," he said, hoarsely; "do you know if I hadn't found you you would have been killed?"

"Yes."

"And you can speak so calmly, child? I must have made you rarely miserable if even death seems preferable to life with me."

She did not answer. Sir Adrian smoothed back her soft hair, half-caressingly, with one hand.

"You must never do it again," he said, gravely. "Nell, promise me."

"Should you have cared," she asked him, sadly, "if I had died, Adrian? Should you have been just a little sorry?"

"Sorry!"

For a moment neither of them spoke, then Adrian said, brokenly,—

"Nell, I must tell you the truth; you may despise me if you like, I can't help it. I have regretted our compact as I never regretted anything in my life. I have known now for weeks—ever since the night of our home-coming—that I made a great mistake."

"And I have disappointed you?"

"You have been true, child, true in deed and word. It was I who was so madly mistaken. I didn't want a mother for Tom, or a mistress for the Court. I wanted a wife—a wife who would be one with me in thought and deed, and love me with her whole heart. Nell, I am punished for my disbelief in love. I have learnt to hate everyone who interests you—everything you do. I am jealous of all that is nearer to you than I am."

There was no answer, only he could hear her breath come and go as he held her in his arms.

"Nell, I can't go on like this any longer—I can't be so near you and yet so far. Shall I go away, dear, and leave you to fill my place at the Court, and train Tom to be a better man than his father? Shall I go away and leave you for ever?"

"You couldn't," she murmured. "Nothing could make me free again."

"Nothing could make you free to be another's, and I think I am selfish enough to be glad of that, but I could free you from my presence."

"I would rather you stayed."

"I can't stay as we are, Nell. If I am to be with you, you must be my wife in deed and truth. I will have all or nothing. Settle, girl."

He little heeded that the storm had ceased. He knew nothing save that he and Nell were together, and that awful barrier between them was broken down.

"Which is it to be?"

She did not answer, only the hand he held nestled more closely in his own.

"Remember, if I stay it must be on my own terms. I shall be jealous of your every thought, Nell, because I know my love is unreturned. My wife has no heart to give me."

"No," said Nell, resolutely. "I gave my heart away long ago, all of it, and I don't think I am one to change."

"Nell!"

The mute despair of his tone touched her. "Dear," she whispered, "don't you understand it is you to whom I gave it. Oh, Adrian, I have been so miserable. I was afraid you would find it out."

"I wish I had. It would have spared me weeks of wretchedness. Nell, I have been a brute to you. Will said as much to-day."

"He had no business to. He—"

"I did behave like a madman," admitted Adrian, penitently, "but, Nell, it was all your

fault. Child, do you think you can forgive me?"

She answered his question by another.

"Are you quite sure—"

"Sure of what?"

"That you like me?"

"That I love you," he corrected, gravely.

"Nell, I love you as my own life. You are dearer to me than any creature ever was before."

He looked down into her blue eyes.

"Kiss me?"

She hesitated.

"It's my right, young lady. Don't you know you owe me a goodly number of caresses to make up for the way you have deprived me of them? Do you know we have been married nearly four months, Nell, and you have never kissed me once?"

A long, long pause. Apparently Sir Adrian was repaying the gift he had demanded with liberal interest.

"Don't you think we had better get home?" asked Nell, demurely. "It is pitch dark, and I am so cold, and your cousin will be waiting dinner."

It was two miles from where they stood to Carruthers Court, but Sir Adrian had ordered the carriage to drive to the nearest accessible point, so that in less than five minutes they would reach its shelter. Raising Nell's slight form he carried her tenderly down the hill and placed her in the brougham. Husband and wife had had many drives together, but never one quite like that. As Sir Adrian lifted Nell out at the grand entrance to the Court she whispered in his ear,—

"This is our true home-coming, dear."

Three years have passed now since the hot summer day when the four Miss Pembertons sat in the drawing-room of the old red house discussing ways and means, and many changes have come to them.

Priscilla still keeps house there, and makes home happy for the "children," but Lily has married an officer and gone to India, and Nora has for some months been Niel Atherstone's happy wife. It is always asserted that the match was made when they were both on a visit at Carruthers Court. She tells her husband laughingly he was jealous of Sir Adrian's perfect happiness, and so attempted a feeble imitation of it; she declares, moreover, he had half a mind to wait for Nell's little daughter, but decided it would be too long.

Niel laughs at her pretty suggestions, but he never whispers to her that once Sir Adrian's happiness was not perfect.

The Pemberton family generally, seeing the devoted attachment of the baronet for his wife, and her loving trust in him, have no idea of the strange compact the two once made to live their lives without love. The only things that puzzle them in the household at the Court is their sister's intense affection for her stepson, and the fact that though always now delighted to see and welcome them all, not one of them was ever invited to cross the threshold of Carruthers until four long months after NELL'S MARRIAGE.

[THE END.]

HINTS FOR HEALTH SEEKERS.

Don't shake a hornet's nest to see if any of the family are at home.

Don't try to take the right of way from an express train at a railway crossing.

Don't blow in the gun your grandfather carried in the war of 1857. It is more dangerous now than it was then.

Don't hold a wasp by the other end while you thaw it out in front of the fire to see if it is alive. It is generally alive.

Don't try to persuade a bull dog to give up a yard of which it is in possession. Possession to a bull-dog is ten points of the law.

Don't call a very large, strong, sinewy man a prevaricator. If you are sure he is a prevaricator hire another man to break the news to him.

THE FAIR ELAINE.

CHAPTER XL.

LADY ELAINE was deeply troubled over Arley's engagement; indeed, she seemed almost to have a presentiment that unhappiness would result from her marriage with this talented but, she feared, unprincipled, young barrister from London.

"Why does it seem 'strange' to you?" Arley asked, referring to her remark regarding it.

Lady Elaine coloured vividly, and was for a moment confused by the question.

She had spoken unguardedly, for she had been thinking of Philip Paxton's proposal of marriage to herself. But she quickly recovered.

"Well, for one thing, you have avoided him so persistently of late," she said.

Arley flushed.

"I know," she said, "but I couldn't keep up the farce that I had been playing any longer; though I never once imagined that Philip cared anything for me. I thought that he meant to win you if he could, and I was determined that he shouldn't if I could help it, for I knew that it was right for Wil to have you. But when your engagement was announced, of course there was no longer any need of my playing the deceiver in the enemy's country, so I dropped out of sight as quietly as I could, and then, it seems, he came to his senses, and found out that he cared for me. I've told him the whole story."

"Arley, you haven't!" interrupted Lady Elaine, in dismay.

"Yes, I have, too," the independent girl retorted, with a comical little shrug of her shoulders. "You don't suppose I was going to drop directly into his arms, and meekly say: 'yes, sir; if you please,' with all that on my conscience, do you?"

"But what did he think of it?"

"I did not care what he thought. I imagined at first that he was so disappointed over the frustration of all his hopes regarding you, he had turned to me in a fit of supposed pique, and you may be sure I was 'raving mad,' as the boys say, for a while awhile. But a straightforward course is always the best, no matter how deep it cuts, so I accepted him of it on the spot, and told him the whole story of my strategy."

"Well, well," exclaimed Lady Elaine, almost breathlessly, more and more astonished, and wondering what her grandson would-a lover had thought of this sharp thrust from the spirited girl.

"Well," Arley resumed, "he confessed that at first he believed himself to be in love with you, for he had never met any one so lovely before; but when I suddenly grew so cold, and began to avoid him— withdrawing all my artillery, you know, because it was no longer needed"—she interrupted with a bright laugh—"he awoke to the fact that something very necessary to his happiness had dropped out of his life, and realized that he had lost his heart to me. I actually told him point-blank that I did not believe him when he said that he loved me. I had no idea of falling at his feet like an over-ripe apple; and, really, at first I did not more than half believe him—I couldn't forget how he had dawdled around you. But I had to succumb at last; and—I will confess it to you, dear—I believe I am very happy."

The blush which suffused her face, and the happy light in her eyes, testified most eloquently to this fact.

Lady Elaine bent down and kissed her, but a sigh escaped her in the act.

She was very anxious and uneasy, although she strove to hide it.

She was now sure that she ought to tell her of what had passed between Philip and herself; but she reasoned that it was too late for that now.

The mischief had been done—Arley had

given her promise, and she might make enemies of them both if she should expose his double-dealing; while it might be as he had said—that he did not realize his feelings towards her until she appeared to withdraw her favour from him.

"Heaven grant that you may be very, very happy," she said, twining her arms about the fair girl's waist; "you surely deserve to be, Arley, for you are true and honest to your heart's core, and I could not bear that you should be deceived or wronged by any one."

"Deceived or wronged?" repeated Arley, while with grave, earnest eyes she searched her friend's face. "Surely you do not think that Philip is deceiving me? What object could he have?"

"None, I hope, dear; but, you see, I am very fond of you, and I want you to be very sure that you love him, and will be perfectly happy if you marry him."

"Did you argue like this with yourself before you accepted Wil?" Arley asked, mischievously.

Lady Elaine laughed, and blushed rosy.

"I must confess, Arley, that I did not," she said; "but then I had known Wil—or about him—all my life, while Mr. Paxton is almost a stranger to us all."

"That is so; but then the heart is a stubborn thing, my dear, and I'm afraid mine is lost beyond recovery," Arley replied with a gay laugh.

"If I could only have known," Lady Elaine murmured, with a sigh of foreboding, after Arley had left her, "that he was meditating this thing, I would have told her before about both of those interviews, and then she would have been on her guard. She is very bright and keen-witted, but I am sadly afraid that she has made a mistake for once. My heart has been strangely drawn towards her, and it would be a great trial to me if her future should be an unhappy one."

But the next two weeks passed so pleasantly and harmoniously, the three pairs of lovers were so devoted and apparently so happy in each other, that an observer would undoubtedly have augured a life of uninterrupted bliss for them all.

At the end of that time Philip Paxton said he must return to London, for his business required his attention, but at Wil's request he promised to run down to Hazelmere every Saturday, and spend the Sabbath as long as Arley should remain a guest there.

Annie Hamilton would not consent to spare her friend until after the wedding, which was to occur now in about a month, although Arley protested that she "had already remained long enough to wear her welcome out a dozen times."

"How can you tell such an awful story?" Annie playfully demanded, in reply to this assertion. "You are the life of the house. Papa remarked it only yesterday, and added that you were the only one of us all who was not so bound up in a *grande passion* as to lose your identity and become stupid."

"I shall surely tender my prettiest courtesy and thanks to Sir Anthony for his compliments the very next time I see him," laughed Arley, gayly, yet blushing as she realized how very much she was bound up in a *grande passion* just then, in spite of her host's assertion.

"Well, then," pursued Annie, decidedly, "you are not to say another word about going away until after the important event. I have arranged for both you and Elaine to be my bridesmaids, and I want you at hand to help me about a hundred little things; and you, with your exquisite taste in matters of dress, dear Arley, will be indispensable to me."

This argument was unanswerable; and as there was really nothing to call Arley away, she was only too glad to remain with these friends who made everything so enjoyable, while it must be confessed she was often very lonely in her own home, with only her aged aunt, Miss McAllister, for company.

The four weeks before the wedding, however, seemed actually to melt away, and were gone

almost before they realized it, and the important day dawned bright and fair.

The bride was, of course, lovely in white satin, with the usual accompaniments—the mist-like veil and pure, fragrant orange blossoms; while the two bridesmaids—Lady Elaine, in her rich, cream-white silk, garnished with wreaths of forget-me-nots and pearls, and Arley in pale pink, with great Marsechal Noil roses drooping gracefully here and there amid folds of frost-like lace—were almost, if not quite, as attractive as the gentle bride herself.

Wit Hamilton and Philip Paxton were, of course the "best men," and both made a fine, manly appearance.

The wedding breakfast was pronounced "elegant," and everything passed off in the smoothest and most approved manner.

The gifts were numerous and costly, and altogether, pretty Annie Hamilton seemed to begin life with every prospect of future happiness and prosperity.

Then came the farewells and confusions of departure, and the happy pair left Hazelmere for a tour of a month, after which they were to take up their residence in their own home, which was not far from Sir Anthony's estate.

Three days later Arley bade her friends "good-bye," and returned to London, where she was to make immediate preparations for her own marriage, since Philip Paxton insisted that there was no reason why it should be delayed, and had obtained Arley's consent that the happy event should be fixed for the twenty-fourth of October.

"I shall expect you both to act as my bridesmaids," Arley had said; when talking it over with her friends.

"But that won't do at all, dear," Annie said, laughing. "I shall be a stately (?) matron, you know, and I'm afraid Mrs. Grandy would boil over at such an unheard-of thing."

"I do not care anything about Mrs. Grandy, nor any other madam who is supposed to exercise a controlling voice in fashion or etiquette. I never did anything like anybody else yet unless I wanted to, and I'm not going to begin to run in other people's ruts now. I'm only going to have those whom I love around me when I am married," returned the independent girl, who, as she asserted, had never yet sacrificed her identity for the sake of custom.

So that matter was arranged as she wished, Lady Elaine also promised to go up to London to spend the last fortnight with her, and all the Hamiltons were to be present at the very quiet wedding.

CHAPTER XL.

ARLEY'S VISITOR.

ARLEY WENTWORTH'S wedding day was not a bright day. Thick clouds overcast the sky, while a heavy fog—London's customary wet blanket—made everything dismal and gloomy enough.

As already intimated, the wedding was to be a very quiet affair, for the orphaned girl had no near relatives who were able to take the burden and care of a large merry-making.

There were only her aged aunt—a lady of between fifty and sixty—and two or three distant cousins on her father's side whom she could claim as kindred, so only her intimate friends, and a few of her acquaintances were bidden to the feast.

She was, however, to be married in St. George's Church, Hanover Square, and with all the pretty paraphernalia which a young and lovely bride should have. This Miss McAllister, who herself was quite wealthy, had insisted upon, and it was also in accordance with Arley's own ideas and wishes.

"What makes you so quiet and sad, Arley, dear?" Lady Elaine asked of her, as she was helping her dress for her marriage.

Arley had whimsically insisted, that she would have no maid about her that morning; her own hands, with the assistance of the her dearest friend, should perform all the necessary offices for the occasion.

"This is your bridal-morn," she continued, "and your face should be bright even if the day is not."

"Do I look sad, Elaine? I did not mean to," Arley replied, with a forced smile; but Lady Elaine, looking into her eyes, saw that they were full of tears.

"What is it, dear, what troubles you?" she asked, twining her arms around her waist, and drawing the troubled girl close to her.

"I don't know; perhaps it is a sort of reaction after all the excitement and labour of preparation, but I feel strangely depressed this morning; instead of looking forward to this event which should only bring me happiness and bright anticipations, I feel as if something dreadful was about to happen to me," Arley responded, as, with a weary sigh, she dropped her head upon the shoulder of her friend.

A cloud passed over Lady Elaine's face. She had regarded her friend's marriage with Philip Paxton, from the very first, with feelings akin to these.

She could not believe that he was true.

Soon after his engagement to Arley, she had learned through Wil, who heard of it while he was in London at one time, of his unfortunate speculations, and the thought had forced itself upon her that he had made his proposals to her merely to build up his fallen fortunes, and failing in that, he had then turned to Arley, as offering the next most tempting bait with which to replenish his empty coffers.

But, of course, she could not breathe anything of this to her friend; she must not allow her to become any more dependent, so she said, as cheerfully as she could:

"These are nervous fears, I am afraid, darling, and you must not carry that pale, sad face to St. George's. What would Mr. Paxton think to behold such a depressed-looking bride? If this is the way all brides feel on their wedding-day, I am afraid I shall be tempted to put off the evil hour as long as possible."

"When are you to be married, Elaine?" Arley asked, her thoughts for the moment drawn away from herself.

"I do not know, dear; no time has been set as yet. Will told me last evening that he had received his appointment."

"What appointment?"

"Sure enough; I forgot that you did not know, but he did not wish to tell anyone until the matter was settled. He has been appointed to go with Powell's exploring expedition to Manitoba in North America, and so, of course, we do not think of a wedding until he returns."

"This is news, indeed," Arley exclaimed, greatly surprised. "When did he apply for this appointment?"

"Sit down here and let me brush out your hair while I tell you about it; we must not waste any time, you know," Lady Elaine said, pushing a low chair before a full-length mirror, and glad to find that any subject would interrupt her friend's sad thoughts.

"He made his application more than six months ago, and some time before my return from school, or," she said, with a little tremulous smile, "he would never have made it at all, since the thought of separation is very painful to us both."

"I should think so," Arley said, thoughtfully.

"But his sense of honour," Lady Elaine resumed, "will not allow him to throw up the appointment, now that it has been awarded him. It is quite a feather in his cap, so to speak, for the Dominion Parliament have authorized Professor Powell to explore the Red River and make a scientific survey of the region drained by it and its tributaries, together with a topographical survey by triangulation—its geology, zoology, botany, and ethnology. I hope you understand it all, dear," the young Countess said, laughing at Arley's puzzled expression. I don't, and I had to get Wil to write it down for me, and then I had to study hard in order to be able

to rattle off that much. But Wil is very anxious to become a professor of geology and botany, and this expedition offers a great deal in the way of instruction, as well as of reputation, and he really cannot afford to lose the opportunity."

"Well, I should consider it a great trial to have him go," Arley returned, "for there must be many dangers attending such an expedition. Just think of his going into that wilderness, with all its ravenous savage beasts and Indians, and goodness knows what besides?"

"Yes," Lady Elaine said. "It is a great trial," tears springing to her eyes; "but it is for the best I am willing to submit to it."

"When does he go?"

"Not until next April."

"And how long will he be gone?"

"About six months, I believe; the weather will not admit of a longer tour than that."

"You will be very lonely while he is gone, Elaine," Arley said, in a sympathetic tone.

"Yes; but I must make the best of that, too," was the smiling reply, though tears hung trembling on the long golden lashes.

"What is it to 'make the best' of anything?" Arley asked, thoughtfully.

"I believe it is to accept whatever is sent to us as sent by an All-wise Father for some good—to bear all life patiently, and be reverently grateful for whatever of joy may fall to our lot; three words, in fact, express it all—trust in Heaven."

"Can you live out your life like that, Elaine?" Arley demanded almost sharply, while she turned to look into those sweetly serious eyes behind her.

"I do not know what is before me, dear," was the low, grave reply, "but I mean to try to live out my life like that. At all events, I know there is no real happiness in this world without faith in Heaven."

Arley sighed.

"I do not know much about it, I fear, and I have always felt that there was something in your life which I do not possess, for you are so happy, so lovable. But I will try to remember what you have said—how I wish you could be with me, always," Arley said, wistfully. "Elaine," she added, "I believe the hardest part of to-day will be the parting from you—perhaps that is why I am so depressed. I wonder why it is that I love you so?"

"Because of my love for you, no doubt, for love is begotten of love, you know," and Lady Elaine bent down and touched her lips to the fragrant hair that she was plaiting.

"When I return from my tour will you come and stay with me until Wil returns to claim you?" Arley asked.

"Yes, dear, I shall be very glad to come. It will help to pass the time away until he gets back, and then, I suppose, you will come to Hazelmere again to perform these bridal duties for me. There," as she put the last pin into the heavy braids of nut-brown hair, "this is done, and I do not believe a French hair-dresser could have done any better; now let me help you on with your dress. How perfectly lovely it is!"

She lifted an exquisite robe of silk and lace from the bed as she spoke, and regarded it admiringly.

"As Annie says," she added, "your taste is simply perfect, and you will make a most charming bride."

Arley shivered as she slipped the dress over her head, and began to help her fasten it.

"Are you cold?" Lady Elaine asked, observing it.

"No. I know the dress is lovely, but I do not like it. I believe I shall never put it on again, and I would not wear it to-day if I had anything else that would do," Arley said, almost passionately.

"Why? What a strange freak!" the young Countess said, while she regarded the clouded face of the young bride-elect with a wistful glance.

Arley did not offer to explain it, but there

was a reason for this sudden dislike of her wedding dress.

It had arrived from Worth's only a day or two previous, and she had thought it the prettiest thing that she had ever seen, and when Philip came in the evening she had coaxed him into her boudoir to look at it.

It hung upon a form to keep it from being crushed, the lovely trail of rich lace and gleaming silk floating out behind the most graceful folds. The corsage was cut low, and from this there extended a covering for the neck made of a network of seed pearls, a fringe of the same finishing it where it joined the body, and also the small, short sleeves.

"Do you care for such pretty things?" she had asked him with a shy, yet happy glance, as she remembered when she was to wear it: "It is all my own idea," she added, "I planned and ordered it myself."

He stood looking at it a moment, not a ray of pleasure lighting up his handsome face.

"Is must have cost a great deal of money," was all he said, then he had turned abruptly away from it, as if the sight annoyed him.

Arley's face flushed a vivid, angry scarlet.

"Yes," she answered, proudly lifting her pretty head, "one's wedding dress is expected to cost a great deal of money."

But it had been spoiled for her from that moment, and that was why she had shivered when she had put it on.

Her lover had thought more of the cost than of the beauty of the robe in which she was to wed him; all the thought of pleasing him, all the pleasure and happy fancies which she had woven in with it, for his sake alone, went for nothing with him. But she told no one of it, she kept it a secret in her own heart, and it had rankled there like a poisoned arrow.

She was as lovely as a dream, however, when she went down to meet him, and she saw his eyes brighten with a pride which half made up for the pain she had suffered over his former indifference.

She would not have a single orange blossom in her wreath.

"Let the poor things have a rest," she had said when discussing the subject. "There will be one bride who will not load the air with their perfume."

And so she had chosen instead a beautiful garland of pure white heath with which to fasten her veil, and delicate vines depending from it trailed down the whole length of her lovely dress.

She wore no ornaments save the network of pearls over her neck, and the fringe which finished it, and fell also over the tops of the long gloves which came up over her arms to meet the tiny sleeves of her dress.

Save the delicate flush on her cheeks, and her scarlet lips, with her dark brows and hair, she was as "pure and chaste as snow," from the crown of her head to the sole of her white slippered feet.

"I am very proud of my love to-day," Philip said, as he met her at the foot of the stairs, and led her out to the carriage which was to convey her to the church.

Lady Elaine, who had followed her, heard the whispered words, and prayed most fervently that he might always love and be "very proud" of her.

Arley's heart bounded and thrilled over the fond sentence, little dreaming how soon, alas! it was to be pierced with a cruel wound, the scar of which would never disappear.

Arriving at the church they were rejoined by Philip and Wil, also Anna Vane and her husband, and the cortège swept up the aisle to the altar, where a few brief moments were all that was necessary for the words to be spoken which bound Arley Wentworth and Philip Paxton for life.

The wedding breakfast was much like other breakfasts upon similar occasions; the congratulations, good wishes, and toasts were numerous and hearty; the bridal presents were properly inspected and admired, and finally the fair bride stole away to prepare for her journey.

She was nearly ready to return to her guests when there came a tap upon her door and a servant entered bearing a note upon a silver tray.

"What is this?" Arley asked, as she took it up and began to unfold it.

"A young person, madam, called a few moments ago and asked for you," the servant replied. "I told her that you could not be disturbed to-day, but she insisted and said she must see you, and finally asked me if I would bring you this note."

Arley gave her attention to the note and read these few words very hastily written:

"Will you please grant me just a few moments, as I have something of the greatest importance to tell you before you go away! I would not have troubled you only that it is exceedingly important."

There was no name signed to this strange request, which was written in a delicate, lady-like hand.

"How singular!" murmured Arley, while a nervous tremor ran over her like a hot flame.

"Where is the lady?" she asked, feeling instinctive that it was a lady who had written the note.

"In the crimson anteroom, and there is a gentleman with her, miss—madam."

Arley smiled at the girl's correction in addressing her, then she said:

"You may ask her to come up here. I think I can spare her ten minutes as well as not," she added to herself, "and I am really quite curious to know what her important communication is."

The servant withdrew, and Arley stood looking out of the window, softly humming a little air to herself, and tapping out the time to it with her pretty foot, while she waited for her visitor.

Never as long as she lived did she forget those few moments while she tarried for the stranger.

Her attitude, the room with all its rich appointments, the graceful sweep of the curtains near which she was standing, the foggy street without, the leaden sky above, were all indelibly stamped upon her mind.

She remembered, too, how happy she was—for her depression had all vanished as if by magic—with what joy she looked forward to her journey with her husband—her husband! How the words thrilled her as she said them over to herself, with not a thought of the misery that was rushing to overtake her like a swift destroyer.

Then the door opened, and she turned to see a fair young girl of about her own age enter the room and come forward to meet her.

She was slight and graceful in form; she had a fair complexion, with great, dark-blue eyes, sunny brown hair that waved prettily about her forehead, a delicate, clear-cut face, and small, beautifully shaped hands and feet.

How quickly and keenly Arley noted and took in all these details of her person.

How rapidly her eye ran over every article of her dress, marking everything, from the tasteful, becoming hat, to the tiny, perfectly fitting boot, and yet there was nothing about the engaging stranger to betray that she had come on an errand that was to dash the cup of happiness from her lips, and rob her of everything that she prized most in life.

CHAPTER XIII.

"I CANNOT GIVE YOU UP."

THE young stranger appeared to be "every inch" the lady, and Arley wondered more and more who she could be and what she could want that she should thus come to her on her wedding-day; while as she gazed upon that refined and delicate face, there seemed to be some strangely familiar look about it that puzzled her.

She had been so intent upon reading her face that she had spoken no word, and the young girl, who had advanced half-way across the room, suddenly stopped, as if abashed at having intruded upon her.

This act recalled Lady Arley to herself, and she went forward to greet her, saying, with her usual cordial frankness,—

"You wished to see me—you have something to tell me?"

"Yes," answered the stranger, but speaking with great apparent reluctance. "I am very sorry to be obliged to intrude at such a time, and I would not had I been able to find you before, and you were not going away to-day, to be gone several months, as I have learned; but it is absolutely necessary that what I have to tell you should be explained at once."

"You have given me no name," Arley said, referring to the note which she had sent up to her. "Will you please tell me whom I have the pleasure of receiving?"

The girl flushed a painful crimson at this question.

"That, and that alone, is my errand here to-day—to tell you who I am, though I shrink from giving you what, I fear, will be a painful shock," was the embarrassed and faltering reply. "My name is the counterpart of your own, or, at least, what your own has been until to-day—*Arley Wentworth!*"

Arley gave her a startled look, and grew a trifle pale at this strange information.

"That is very strange. I do not think it possible. I do not understand you at all," she said, and now she spoke somewhat haughtily.

"Will you listen while I tell you my story?" the stranger asked, and the appealing look in her beautiful blue eyes disarmed Arley at once, and her momentary irritation vanished. "I will be just as brief as possible," she added, "for I know that your time is limited."

"Certainly I will listen to you. There is an hour yet before we shall be obliged to leave, but I had intended giving that time to my friends," Arley said, kindly.

"I will not be half that time; but I could not let you go away and not tell you," said the fair stranger.

"Then come and sit down," the young bride returned, drawing forward a low arm chair, and seating herself in another.

"I can tell you nothing of my parentage," the girl began, "for I know nothing about it; that I have yet to learn from others. My earliest recollections are of a very simple life with rough but kind-hearted people. The man whom I was taught to call and regard as my father was a fisherman, who owned a small sailing vessel with which he cruised along the coast upon which we lived, catching what he could in the shape of fish and selling his cargo to whoever would buy."

"Upon one occasion a severe storm overtook him, and he was driven far out to sea—in fact, his vessel came very near being wrecked, and he, with his small crew, barely escaped with their lives. When the storm passed, they patched up their injured craft as well as they could, and then began their toilsome task of working back into port."

"While thus engaged one of the sailors desecrated a small object which excited his curiosity, tossing about on the still angry waves, like thistle-down upon the wind. He pointed it out to his captain, who also became very curious about it, and immediately launched a boat for the purpose of securing it. To his great astonishment he found it to be a child, carefully wrapped in a waterproof and lashed into the tray of a trunk. At first they thought I was dead—for I was that child—I was so benumbed with the cold and wet; but after working over me for awhile, they perceived signs of life, and persevering in their efforts, they finally had the satisfaction of restoring me completely. The captain took me home to his wife, and having no children of their own, they concluded to adopt me, and I was named *Ina Corrillion*.

"They gave me such care as they could, but living in such a primitive way as they did, it was not much like what the petted darlings of this country receive. Their home was on the northern coast of Spain, not far from the city of Bayonne, in France. It was a rude little hut, containing only three small rooms,

which were furnished in the most meagre manner; if indeed, they could be said to be furnished at all.

"I lived in this way until I was twelve years of age, growing up ignorant of everything, save how to cook the coarse food which we ate, wash and iron the few clothes we could afford to have, and mend the sails belonging to the vessels which my supposed father owned, and which were often torn in the gales at sea.

"It was a barren life—I see in your kind eyes how sorry you are that anyone should have to live so—and though I knew nothing of any other, yet I can remember how I recoiled from its hardships, my young heart continually yearning—yes, starving for something which I missed and had not. I suppose these people loved me after a fashion of their own; but they never manifested any affection for me, or for each other, although I was treated with a rough sort of kindness by them both.

"When I was twelve I was deprived, by accident, of even this care, and again thrown a waif upon the world. A heavy piece of timber, which was to be used in repairing the vessel belonging to Carlos Corrillion—my so-called father—was being hoisted to the deck, when the ropes gave way, and it came crashing down with tremendous force. Carlos was standing directly beneath it, and his wife seeing his danger, sprang forward, thinking to ward off the fatal blow; she made a misstep and fell, and both husband and wife were crushed to death by the massive beam.

"I will not go into detail now regarding their burial and what followed, but simply state important facts. I was taken to Bayonne, after all was over, and put into a charity school, and now I began for the first time to realize something of the comforts and purpose of life. I seized upon my books somewhat as a famishing dog would seize upon a bone, and devoured everything within my reach.

"Carlos and Annette Corrillion were partly of French, partly Spanish descent, and spoke the language of Spain in an incorrect fashion. Of course this had become to me like my native tongue; but after I went to reside with the sisters at Bayonne, I was taught both French and English; and here, also, I began to experience a curiosity regarding my parentage. I had known for years that I was not the child of those rude people, for Annette had told me the story of my coming to me almost as soon as I was able to understand anything. She had saved, too, all the articles of clothing in which I was clad when the sea cast me up into her husband's arms, and these things I took with me when I went to Bayonne. One of the sisters there was very kind to me, interesting herself in an unusual degree in my progress, and assisting me over many rough places, until I grew to love her dearly.

"One day I told her all that I knew of my story, and showed her my little bundle of treasures. She examined them very critically, and became quite excited over them.

"There was a little dress and skirt, made of the finest material, and beautifully embroidered; a tiny pair of lisle thread stockings, and shoes; a little chain of fine gold, which had been clasped round my neck, and marked on the clasp with the letters 'A. W.' There was also a tiny ring, with the name of 'Arley' traced in wee letters on the inside; and, while looking over the waterproof cloak, which had been wrapped around my bundle, she had found a pocket, on the inside of which a piece of cloth had been sewn, bearing the name, 'Evelyn Wentworth.'"

"My mother's name!" exclaimed Arley, with white lips and dilating eyes.

Her companion did not reply to her interruption, except by a look of sorrowful compassion, and then resumed:

"The sister folded everything with great care, and told me never to part with one of them. 'You will find your friends some day, if you keep them,' she said; and also remarked that she believed, from my appearance and the name upon the waterproof, that I was of English parentage. Greatly encouraged by her

sympathy and interest, I redoubled my efforts to learn, and gave my attention almost exclusively to English branches.

"When I was fifteen, the matron of the school had an application from an English lady who was travelling for a nurse; her own had suddenly sickened and died, and as she had young children, it was necessary that her place be supplied at once. She wished for someone who could speak her own language, if possible, and who would be willing to return to England with her. I need not tell you that I pleaded most eagerly for the place when the matron made the application known, and after an interview with the lady herself, I was at once installed as nurse over three unruly, but very pretty children. The family remained abroad a year, and then we all came to England. Mrs. Alden's home is in Bristol, and there I have been with her during the last three years. She has been very kind to me, treating me more like a friend than a servant, allowing me time for study under good and thorough masters. She has shown a great deal of sympathy and interest in my history, and has believed with me, from the fact of my having been clad in those finely wrought garments, that I belonged in an entirely different sphere from any that I had hitherto occupied.

"Soon after our return Mr. Alden began to institute inquiries regarding my parentage, but without success, until a month ago, or a little more, we came to London. A week after our arrival here we read in one of the papers a notice of the approaching marriage of 'Miss Arley Wentworth with Mr. Philip Paxton.' The name—your name—thrilled me at once, for I felt that at last we had found a clue. We thought the rest would be comparatively easy, but we found great difficulty in ascertaining your place of residence.

"Day after day Mr. Alden made inquiries, but it was only yesterday that he succeeded in finding Mr. Paxton's chambers. He was out when Mr. Alden called, and he was somewhat dismayed to learn that he was to be married to-day, and go abroad immediately for several months. He then asked the clerk if he could give him the name of the guardian of the young lady whom he was to marry, and he immediately directed him to Mr. Holley, your lawyer. He hastened at once to his office, and laid the facts which I have related to you before him.

"He examined the articles of which I have spoken, and questioned Mr. Alden very closely, and then not satisfied he came to see me, and obliged me to repeat my story. He was very loth to admit my claim, for he is very fond of you; but at last he was obliged to confess that I am entitled to the name of—of—Arley Wentworth. He was, however, so disturbed that he refused to come and acquaint you with the facts, although we all felt that it belonged to him to do so; Mr. Alden recoiled from the task, and at last I said that I would come and tell you my story, and that is how I happened to intrude upon you at this unfortunate hour.

"I know, Mrs. Paxton," the girl concluded, raising her pleading eyes, which were full of tears, to Arley's white face, "how hard this must be for you—and upon this day of all others I regret that you should have to learn it. I feel as if you must almost hate me for coming here in this way to steal your name from you, and to throw upon your shoulders the burden of mystery and doubt which for so many years I myself have borne. But it was necessary—I must establish my birthright, and learn something of the parents for whom my heart had been hungering all my life.

"Don't look at me so, please," she continued, as she looked up and met Arley's burning, staring eyes. "I would gladly have spared you if I could; forgive me—pray forgive me—for the pain I am causing you."

Arley put out her hand to stop her.

"Have you that package of clothing with you?" she asked, in a hollow tone.

"Yes, I brought it, but I left it outside the

door; I did not like to bring it in until I had told you my story. I will get it for you."

She arose and went to the door, and Arley, in spite of the conflicting emotions which were raging in her heart, could not help noticing how perfectly ladylike and graceful she was in every movement, and she found herself wondering how it could be possible for any one to become so refined and cultivated in the face of the difficulties which had beset her hard life from the very beginning.

She brought the package and laid it in Arley's lap.

With joy, trembling fingers she unfolded the waterproof, and there within it, wrapped in a fine towel, was a little flannel skirt, finished on the bottom with rich embroidery. The little dress, too, was of finest texture and most dainty make. The socks and shoes were soiled and defaced by the sea-water, but were evidently the best that could be obtained.

There was a little box in the package; opening it, Arley found the chain and ring of which the stranger had told her; and she found, too, the name "Arley" on one, the initials "A. W." on the other.

Turning the pocket of the waterproof inside out, she saw the name "Evelyn Wentworth" written upon a piece of cloth which was sewed to the garment.

As she saw this she arose without a word, but with a perfectly colourless face, and rang the bell for her maid.

The summons was answered almost immediately, for inquiries were beginning to be made for the absent bride, and the girl was loitering in the corridor without.

"Send Aunt Angeline here," Arley said, authoritatively.

"Lor, Miss Arley! are you ill?" cried the girl, startled by her white face and burning eyes.

"No. Send Aunt Angeline here," she reiterated, tersely, and the maid disappeared as if she had been shot.

Very soon, however, the door unclosed again to admit an elderly lady, who, after one startled glance at Arley, turned and regarded the stranger inquisitively.

With swift, eager steps Arley glided to her side, and holding the little ring and chain (which she had retained in her hand) up before her, asked, in a low, breathless tone:

"Auntie, did you ever see these before?"

The old lady uttered a startled cry as she beheld them; then she grasped them in her trembling hands and examined them closely.

"Child," she said, excitedly, "this ring I bought and had marked myself, and the chain your grandfather purchased at the same time. We sent them to Evelyn for you, when she wrote us that she had a little daughter and was going to call her Arley. Where on earth did you get them? I supposed they were at the bottom of the sea."

Arley sank weakly into a chair at these words. She could not utter one word in reply, for it seemed as if her tongue was paralyzed, and as if all her senses were slipping from her.

Her young visitor sprang forward and fell upon her knees by her side, and began to chafe her hands.

"Forgive me—forgive me," she pleaded, while glittering tears rolled over her own pale face; "I would have spared you if I could."

This called Miss McAllister's attention again to her.

"Child, who are you, and what have you done that needs to be forgiven?"

She bent to scrutinize her more closely, and all at once started back with a low, frightened cry, her face growing grey and haggard.

"Who are you, I say?" she whispered hoarsely. "Are you a spirit that you come here with the face and eyes of Evelyn, my lost niece? I could almost swear that she had come back to me as fresh and fair as she was when she left us almost twenty years ago. Child—child, what is your name?"

At these wild, startling words poor Arley bowed her face upon her hands with a low,

despairing cry, and knew now why the face of the young girl had seemed so strangely familiar to her when she had entered the room.

It was the counterpart of a picture which was even then hanging in the library below—the picture of the lovely woman whom, until this hour, she had always believed to be her mother.

She knew, too, that the young stranger's story was true—the identification of the ring and chain, together with Miss McAllister's last words, had proved it beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The new Arley looked from the wretched bride to the perplexed and startled spinster in a helpless, appealing way.

It made her miserable to cause all this pain and confusion, and she did not know what to say in answer to Miss McAllister's question.

But Arley came to her aid, and we are yet to learn that the strength and courage of heroes were in our fair young friend.

She sat suddenly erect, dropped her limp hands from her face, and, confronting Miss McAllister, said,—

"Aunt Angeline, she is Evelyn Wentworth's child; her name is Arley Wentworth; she is your grandniece, and not I; I am an impostor, who all my life have been subsisting upon the bounty of strangers, while she has gone unloved and uncared-for all her days. Tell her!" she concluded, turning to the girl at her side.

And, rising from her humble position, she repeated her story in a few simple words to the amazed woman who was her mother's aunt. She showed her also the little clothes, and the waterproof, with the name written in Evelyn Wentworth's own hand, and Miss McAllister was convinced of the truth of her statements.

"I never heard anything like it!" she said, in a bewildered way. "I feel as if I had been bewitched. But, my dear, you surely have Evelyn's face; your voice makes me almost believe that she has come back and is speaking to me; and my heart is drawn towards you with great tenderness. But, my darling," turning, and fondly laying her trembling hand on Arley's head, "how can I beg to think of any one else in the place you have occupied for so many years. I cannot give you up, my love, even though I were told a hundred times that you are not Evelyn's child."

The young stranger sprang forward and seized the woman's hand, crying, as she pressed it to her lips:

"Oh, I don't want you to give her up—I never thought of such a thing; I do not wish anybody to give up anything. I only wanted to be sure who I was—that I really belong to somebody, and need no longer live with such a mystery hanging over me. I thank you for saying such kind words regarding my resemblance to my mother, and that you feel tenderly towards me; I shall always love you for it. I am so sorry to have made you so unhappy," she went on, turning to Arley with touching humility; "but I will go away now and never trouble you again. I hope, when you get a little accustomed to thinking of this, it will not seem quite so hard to you; you have a kind husband, and perhaps, in his love and care, you will forget, by-and-by, how I have troubled you to-day. My only object in coming to you was to establish my identity, and I did not dare to let you go away lest something should happen to you before I could tell you. I thank you very much for receiving me so kindly, and bearing with me so patiently. When you get back, since you have a new name, perhaps you will not object to my taking, in a very quiet way, the one that belongs to me. But I will not annoy you any further now, I pray that you may have a prosperous journey, and be very happy."

She bent down and just touched Arley's fragrant hair with her lips, and then turned away as if to leave the room.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

The board of education—the schoolmaster's desk.

Can the books of a gas company be called light literature?

Why is it profitable to keep poultry?—For every grain they give a peck.

What part of a cigar is like a tree?—The ash is.

Billows says he once saw a father knock his boy down, and he thought it the most striking picture of a son down he ever saw.

Some one asks: How long is a man a by-the-groom? We believe it is fashionable now not to skip out for two months.

"It seems to me," moaned Algernon, as he flew toward the front gate, with the old man close behind him, that there are more than three feet in a yard.

A little girl, who was reprimanded for playing with the boys, and was told that being seven years old she was too big for that now, replied: "Grandma, the bigger we grow the better we like us."

A merchant's little boy overheard a conversation between his parents concerning a wedding that was soon to come off, and recalled the subject at the breakfast-table the next morning by asking the following questions: "Papa, what do you want to give the bride away for? Can't you sell her?"

WHAT THE GROOM SAYS.—It was at the house of the bride's parents, after the wedding. On the table was exposed the costly presents. Two gentlemen were examining them. Said one of them suddenly: "These, you say, are the bride's presents; but what does the groom get?" "Oh," replied the other, "he gets the woman." "Is that all?" said the first speaker. "Poor fellow."

A WOMAN'S REVENGE.—"So you say you got even with Mrs. Jones when she tried to spite you for wearing a handsome dress than yours at your wedding anniversary and attracting all the attention?" "Oh, yes, I got even with her." "How did you manage it?" "Well, you see, she had her little boy with her, and when she took him on her lap, I peeped on orange and gave it to him while she was looking the other way." "And of course he was soon swimming in the juice and the dress was ruined." "Precisely."

DWARFS.

Great men are like Nans, one or two in a snuff for a nation, and it is the safest even to keep them in a cage.

Wealth don't honest, so much in the amount of money a man has as in the amount of his wants.

A jest is something that makes you laugh at first and afterwards makes you angry because you did laugh.

Simplicity is the hardest of all things to imitate, it is so easy to do it.

Truth is simple, and the greatest truth the most simple. It is the same all over the world whether you speak it Choctaw, English, or Patagonian.

The man who don't travel in other kintrys can never be thoroly acquainted with his own. Silence is safe. We can hear more, and expose ourselves less.

Simple men are not allways grate, but grate men are allways simple.

Memories that retain everything are not unlike the attacks in old-fashioned knutry houses, full of fossils and impracticable rubbish.

Humour may not be so brilliant as wit, but it is a great deal more affectationate.

The first hypocrite we have any account of was the satan, and the last one will be one of his relations.

Opinyuns, the best of them, are but respectable guesses.

JOSE BILLINGS.

"What is the worst thing about riches?" asked the Sunday-school superintendent. And the new boy said, "Not having any."

Indignant mother: "Surely you don't mean this for a likeness of my son? Why, the boy looks like an idiot." Photographer: "I'm very sorry, but I can't help that, ma'am."

"What horrid weather!" exclaimed Calina's mistress, one day. "Yes, ma'am; and the worst of it is, as long as this doesn't change, we can't expect anything better!"

The young man who breathed "soft nothings" into his girl's ear for six hours on her father's front door-step was afterwards advised by the father, who had been "taking it all in," not to let his young affections run to waste.

"Mr. Boatman," said a timid woman to the ferryman who was rowing her across the river, "are people ever lost in this river?" "Oh, no, ma'am," he replied; "we always find 'em again within a day or so."

The man who remains single all his life may have the satisfaction of knowing that he has done an unpeppable kindness to one woman—viz., the woman he might have made his wife.

"Pat," said a traveller, "why do you make the stone wall around your shanty so thick?" "Why, please your honour, I hear they have extraordinary high winds in America, so I thought if I built it about as thick as it was high, if it should blow over it would be just as high as it was afore, yer honour."

When little Minnie was two years old she asked for some water one night. When it was brought she said: "Papa, can't you get some fresh water? This tastes a little withered." Her little sister Belle had been constricted to a light in the room, and waked in great distress, crying: "We can't see, Aunt Bessie; my eyes are all blown out."

"I've bet a bottle of champagne that's a married couple," remarked a well-dressed man at the window of a fashionable club-house and watching a lady and gentleman who were crossing the street during a heavy shower. "I can't imagine your reason for saying so," replied his companion. "It's plain enough. Don't you see the centre of the umbrella is over his head, not over hers."

Just was Tames—Ethal: "Oh! isn't it lovely? The paper says that huge mastiffs are to be let out dogs for young ladies this season." Rudora: "Yes; that's just too sweet for anything. Why, a mastiff is almost as big as a pony." Ethal: "Yes; won't it be lovely? When dear Alphonsie gets tired of promenading with me by moonlight alone I can lift him up and let him ride on the mastiff."

Groom: "What are doing, my love?" Bride: "Making out a list of flowers which I want you to order for our little garden." "Oh, yes, so I see; but my love, you want the flowers to bloom this summer, don't you?" "Why, of course." "Well, those you have put down do not bloom until the second season." "Oh, that is all right." "All right?" "Yes; I am getting the list from a last year's catalogue."

CONSCIENCE is a great mystery. "Willie," said a good mother to her naughty little boy, "when you went to the cupboard to steal those tarts weren't you afraid of something?" "Yes, ma'am," was the reply of the demure youngster. Now was the time to enforce the moral lesson, and the mother said, "Willie, what were you afraid of?" "Afraid I couldn't find the tarts," said Willie, who since that little episode has become a rich man.

A PAPER gravely announces in its advertising columns:—"To let. An elegantly furnished room to a gentleman already heated." Among the artistic advertising notices are the following: "Two young women want washing." "Wood and coal split." "Teeth extracted with great pains." A cheerful advertisement is this: "Try our coffee. You will never use any other."

A HEALTH writer says: "Sleepless people should count the sun." "Those who don't care much about sleep generally count the daughter."

"DIDN'T I tell you not to ask your Uncle James for money?" said a mother, casting a hard look at her son. "No." "What didn't I tell you this morning not to ask him?" "Yes, said not to ask him when you were about—" "Teens!" "But to strike him for half a crown while you were out and you would give me a sixpence of it."

A GENTLEMAN who has recently taken up the study of French, and who loses no opportunity of using the little knowledge he has thus far acquired of that language by translating and pronouncing such French words and phrases as his friends might meet with when he is present, was thus addressed by an acquaintance: "If you only knew as much English as you do French, you might get along splendidly."

A VERY thin and miserable-looking passenger sat squeezed up in an omnibus, and, after enduring half-an-hour's torture, gave vent to his feelings to the stout passenger beside him. "I think it would be only fair if people travelling by bus were charged by weight." To this the stout companion replied: "You may be thankful it isn't so, for I'm sure that no conductor would think it worth his while to pick you up."

"How many donkeys have you here, my little man?" asked a passenger in a country train, protruding his head through the station window. "Oh, we've got some donkeys here, but most of them keep right on to Bristol." The stranger bumped the back of his head to the window, and sank back in his seat.

A CONTUMACIOUS old bachelor was out at a social gathering the other evening, where he was so unfortunate as to become seated behind a party of vivacious young ladies. Conversation turned upon athletic subjects, when one of the young men inquired: "Mr. Brown, what is your favourite exercise?" "Oh, I have no preference; but just as present I should prefer dumb bells," was his rather curt reply.

"Let's see!" he remarked to a doctor, "haven't you a broken in the clothing business in Liverpool?" "Exactly. My brother Moses was there." "And how is he doing?" "Bad—worry bad. Moses was under the man to see opportunities." "How?" "Well, when the flood came Moses should have been in dry clothes coat and good shoes, but he was not. Dan then did not took place Moses should have been stocked up with gun and pistol, but he didn't so much as a trigger. Moses was on his way to the workhouse, he was."

BOTH SATISFIED.

Mrs. X., a well-known beauty, had hosts of admirers. It is therefore not strange that both were made concerning the genuineness of the lovely blush which mantled her cheek. To end the controversy, which was becoming exciting, one gallant gentleman, less kind than the rest, proposed to ask the beauty for a proof that would settle the dispute.

In an unfortunate moment, and perhaps trembling at his own temerity, he said:

"Miles X., do you pain?"

"Bring me a glass of water," the sign said, sweetly, "and you shall see."

The water was brought, and she handed him a spotless cambric handkerchief.

"Now dip that in the water, and rub it on here," she said, presenting him a peachy cheek so temptingly near that his heart stood still as he gently and deprecatingly touched it.

"Now, look at the handkerchief!" she said, somewhat sternly.

It was as spotless as before.

"Are you satisfied?" she demanded, more sternly yet.

"Yes," quavered he, "I am satisfied."

"And so am I," said the injured beauty, as she dashed the water in his face.

SOCIETY.

H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT was to have taken two months' leave, and to spend that time at Simla. The Duke engaged a house at Musbora, and the leave had been granted; but now we hear that his Royal Highness would only spend ten days at Simla at the end of the season. The Duke of Connaught has accepted an invitation to join the Himalaya Club. This circumstance will add to the prestige of the club.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES are to arrive at Abergeldie Castle during the second week in August, and the Duchess of Edinburgh will reach Birkhall about the same time. The Duchess remains in Russia for about a fortnight longer; and when she goes to Scotland her children will continue to occupy Abergeldie House.

MARQUES for cruizers have, I am told, says Truth, become the fashion. But at present no one seems to know what is or what is not a cruizer. One day one hears of such a race being won by a famous twenty-tonner of a season or two ago, on another of a crack yawl of but a season past scoring honours. Such a state of affairs can have, but one result—and that is probable. If cruizer races are encouraged, one day a flying cruizer will be built with iron ballast and all the rest of it; in fact, as it is, I am told that one cruizer at present racing is fast enough to beat many races, and that one, if not two, of last year's forty-tonners intend calling themselves cruizers later on. Would it not be better either to abolish the term "cruizer" or to impose penalties on winners, since "duffer" races must be intended to enable each craft to win a prize in turn?

THIS YEAR'S CHALDEANIAN BALL, says an authority, was a greater success than has been the case for many years. The spectacle was, therefore, not observed of persons in kilts arriving at entertainments which have nothing whatever to do with the Highlanders. The substitution of the Household Brigade quadrille for the fancy-dress one was a move in the right direction, and the people who appeared in fancy costume were almost without exception quite unknown to fame.

THE LAST MAGAZINE of the season, says the *World*, unmistakably proved that the show is losing some of its attractions. Perhaps we ought not to be surprised at this. Not only do most of us know the teams by heart, but we get terribly bored by reading about them. The thing is done to death. When the concluding revival first began to be talked about it was handled delicately by the Press, and if I remember rightly the *Field* was the first journal that gave us articles on the meet, while "the Van Driver" in *Baily's Magazine* told us all about the funerals at Alexandra Palace, and the jolly dinners at Greenwich and Richmond that formed the sequel to them. Then "the dailies" took up the tale, and the number of special correspondents to be found, note-book in hand, at the Magazine increased every year. We were saturated with coaching. Perhaps the *World* was guilty of adding to the pile of information poured into contemporaneous columns by many pens. Let "Bras de Fer" deny the indictment if he can.

It is stated, on the best authority, that the Garmoyle-Fortescue case has been settled and withdrawn from Court. The amount to be paid by the defendants is considerable, but the exact figure has not so far transpired.

HENRY REGATTA was celebrated this year in the loveliest of June weather, and the attendance, as might be expected at the great water picnic of the season, was immense. The bridge had beyond its usual complement of oaches; and all down the Bucks side the barges and house-boats made a continuous parade of brilliance and luxury. In the Beck-shire meadows the throng of beautiful toilettes was quite unprecedented.

STATISTICS.

LOSS BY FIRE.—The annual loss by fire in the United States is about \$20,000,000. It is about twice as much per inhabitant as the loss of Great Britain, four times as much as that of France, and six times that of Germany. At the average rate of production it would require the constant labour of about 400,000 men to replace the loss. The loss is nearly as much as the amount collected on internal revenue, and one-third more than the annual interest of the public debt.

LONGEVITY IN ENGLAND.—The mortality returns for England in the year 1881—which have just been completed—showed the deaths of ninety-one persons who were registered as 100 years old and upwards when they died. Of these aged persons twenty-five were men, and sixty-six women. The ages of the men are recorded as follows: Nine were 100, five 101, three 102, one 103, two 104, three 105, one 106, and one who died at Hockham, in Norfolk, if the register is to be relied upon, had attained 112 years. Of the women twenty-four had reached 100, fifteen 101, eight 102, two 103, six 104, two 105, three 106, and three 107.

GEMS.

THERE is a blessing attending the ministry of mercy.

GIVE neither counsel nor salt until you are asked for it.

FAITH and hope cure more diseases than medicine.

INDUSTRY needs not wish, and he who lives upon hope will die fasting.

A CHILD, like a letter, often goes astray through being badly directed.

LET no one overdo you with favours; you will find it an insufferable burden.

CONSCIENCE is the voice of the soul; the passions are the voice of the body.

DESPAIR and postponement are cowardice and defeat. Men were born to succeed, not to fail.

IMPOLITENESS is derived from two sources—indifference to the divine and contempt for the human.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO BOTTLE TOMATOES FOR WINTER USE.—Pare and core the tomatoes; add salt and pepper to taste. Boil about one hour. Skim all that rises to the top. Put the bottles in water and let them boil, and fill while they are hot and the tomatoes boiling. After they are filled put the bottles in the water, put in the corks tightly, boil for an hour, cork tightly, and seal them.

TO PICKLE RED CABBAGE.—After removing the coarse leaves from some red cabbages, wipe them clean, cut them in long, thin slices or shreds, and put them on a large sieve, well covering them with salt, and let them drain all night; then put them into stone jars, and pour over them boiling vinegar and white pepper, in the proportion of one ounce of pepper to a quart of vinegar, till they are covered with it.

TO PICKLE TOMATOES.—For this purpose the small round ones are the best, and each should be pricked with a fork, to allow some of the juice to exude, but keep it for the pickle. Put them into a deep earthen vessel, sprinkle salt between every layer, and leave them there for three days covered; then wash off the salt, and cover them with a pickle of cold vinegar, to which add the juice, mixed with a large handful of mustard-seed and one ounce each of cloves and white pepper, as being generally sufficient for one peck of fruit. It makes an excellent sauce for roast meat, and will be ready in about a fortnight.

MISCELLANEOUS.

AT GUJARATI TRANSLATION of the Queen's Book is proposed in Bombay, and a young Parsee lady, Miss Putlibai Wadia, has asked for the necessary permission.

BANK HOLIDAYS are likely to be introduced in France, and the Government propose to try the experiment of making Easter Monday and Whit-Monday general holidays throughout the country.

RECALL at night not only your business transactions, but what you have said to those to whom you have spoken during the day, and weigh in the balance of conscience what you have uttered. If you have done full justice in all your remarks it is well. If you have not, then seek the earliest opportunity to make amends, and carefully avoid a repetition of the wrong.

In business, in home-life, in social intercourse, in politics, there is a success worth striving for, which is the attainment of the immediate object in view; but there is something far higher, far more valuable, far more noble. It is the purity of character, the elevation of purpose, the fidelity to principle, and the perseverance of effort which are of themselves the real success of life, that will shine through all the clouds of temporary failures.

OVER-HASTY.—A hasty judgment is rarely a correct one. Nothing, therefore, is more unjust than to judge of a man by too short an acquaintance, and too slight inspection; for it often happens that in the lobby and thoughtless, and dissipated there is a secret radical worth which may shoot out by proper cultivation; that the spark of Heaven, though obstructed and dimmed, is yet not extinguished, but may, by the breath of counsel and exhortation, be kindled into a flame. To imagine that everyone who is not completely good is irrevocably abandoned is to suppose that all are capable of the same degree of excellence. It is, indeed, to exact from all that perfection which none can ever attain. And, since the purest virtue is consistent with some vice, and the virtue of the greatest number with almost an equal proportion of contrary qualities, let none too hastily conclude that all goodness is lost, though it may for a time be clouded and overwhelmed; for most minds are the slaves of external circumstances, and conform to any hand that undertakes to mould them, roll down any torrent of custom in which they happen to be caught, or bent to any importunity that bears hard against them.

SCOTCH SUPERSTITIONS.—It was not considered lucky to pare the nails of a child under one year old, and when the operation was performed the mother was careful to collect every scrap of the cuttings and burn them. It was considered a great offence for any person, other than the mother or near relation, in whom every confidence could be placed, to cut a baby's nails; if some forward, officious person should do this, and the baby afterwards be taken ill, this would give rise to grave suspicions of evil influence being at work. The same remarks apply to the cutting of a baby's hair. I have seen the door locked during hair-cutting, and the floor swept afterwards, and the sweepings burned, lest perchance any hairs might remain and be picked up by the enemy. Dr. Livingstone, in his book on the Zambesi, mentions the existence of a similar practice among some African tribes. "They carefully collect and afterwards burn or bury the hair, lest any of it fall into the hands of a witch." Mr. Munter mentions that the same practice is common among the Patagonians, and the practice extends to adults. He says that after bathing, which they do every morning, the men's hair is dressed by their wives, daughters, or sweethearts, who take the greatest care to burn the hair that may be brushed out, as they fully believe that spells may be wrought by evil-intentioned persons who can obtain a piece of their hair. From the same idea, after cutting their nails, the parings are carefully committed to the flames.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. M. G.—Juanita is pronounced Whah-nee-tah, with the accent on the second syllable, and physique is pronounced fee-zick, with the accent on the last syllable.

TOM A.—Perhaps he is annoyed at your having put off the wedding day so long. If you really love her it would be discreet for you to propose an earlier day for the marriage, and see what her response would be.

S. P. B.—The Tower of Babel has been thought to be identified with the ruin known as Birs Nimrod, and to have been abandoned through the confusion of tongues then occasioned by the Divine displeasure.

ALICE.—It would be far better for you to marry than to try to become an actress. Your talents may appear quite magnificent at home, but we doubt if they would be equal to professional duty without long cultivation and trial.

T. C. H.—You have no power to make him keep his engagement if he should choose to break it. But if he marries anybody else you can sue him for breach of promise, and should you do so, those letters of his would be strong witnesses against him.

L. E.—It would be impertinent for a man to ask a young lady for a kiss unless he was her accepted lover, and she should let him see by her manner that such familiarity was displeasing to her. A lady should not take off her glove to shake hands.

D. T. J.—The term "forlorn hope" is applied to a body of officers and men who volunteer, or are detailed (more generally the former) for some important and desperate undertaking in war, the extreme peril of which affords scant hope of safe delivery. Consequently it is a contemplated enterprise of great danger and doubtful issue.

E. G. D.—The twelfth of July is celebrated by the secret society called Orangemen as the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne, in which William III., Prince of Orange, defeated his father-in-law, James II., King of England. The battle was fought July 1, 1690. The defeated monarch fled to France, where he remained until his death, September 16, 1701.

DOLLY.—Until the young man becomes your accepted lover he has no right to interfere with your reception of attention from other gentlemen. Still, if you wish to win his love, you should be cautious about exciting his jealous animosity. In such a case no definite rule can be laid down, but a lady must depend on her own tact and judgment.

R. S. B.—With reference to this young man, you can do nothing until he writes to you or visits you. He has probably found another sweetheart, or he may be married. If you have parents and a home, remain where you are. It is very foolish and imprudent for a young lady to leave her home without a definite place of employment and residence. Nursing is now taught in all the principal hospitals. It has become a profession.

W. F. R.—Judging from the arms and the name, the large coin is probably Spanish, of the time of Charles IV., who began to reign in 1788, but an examination would be required to identify it and fix its value. It may have been issued for some of the dependencies of Spain. The second is probably what it purports to be—French. In both cases the letters are likely mint marks. "A" represents Paris. In works on coinage the copper coins are not commonly reproduced as are those in gold and silver, and an expert only can estimate the value of specimens.

B. W. J.—The National Monument at Washington in the United States when finished will be the loftiest structure in the world by about thirty feet. The towers of the cathedral at Cologne, just finished, have a height of 534 feet and 11 inches; tower of St. Nicholas, Hamburg, 475 feet 1 inch; cupola of St. Peter's, Rome, 469 feet 2 inches; cathedral spire at Strasburg, 465 feet 1 inch; pyramid of Cheops, 449 feet 5 inches; tower of St. Stephen's, Vienna, 443 feet 10 inches; tower of St. Martin's, Landshut, 434 feet 8 inches; cathedral spire at Freiburg, 410 feet 1 inch; cathedral of Antwerp, 404 feet 10 inches; cathedral of Florence, 390 feet 5 inches; St. Paul's, London, 365 feet 1 inch; cathedral tower at Magdeburg, 339 feet 11 inches; tower of the new votive church at Vienna, 314 feet 11 inches; tower of the Rathaus at Berlin, 288 feet 8 inches; towers of Notre Dame, Paris, 232 feet 11 inches.

L. B. T.—The earliest history of medicine is legendary. There is reason to believe that Egypt was the country in which this, as well as other arts of civilized life, was first cultivated, the office of priest and physician being probably combined in the same person. From the early Greek writers we may read of the wonders performed by Esculapius, who surpassed his teacher, Chiron, in the healing art, and succeeded so far as to restore the dead to life; hence the term Esculapian, or healing art. According to Homer, Esculapius left two sons, who as physicians attended the Greek army, and three daughters—Hygieia, Panacea, and Agle. The temples of Esculapius usually stood without the city, in healthy situations, and patients cured of ailments offered a sacrifice and brought a tablet in his temple, some of these tablets being still extant. The votive tablets of Esculapius are only one of the many sources proving the ancient origin of scientific medicine. In the schools of philosophy, attention was always given to the healing art.

TROUBLED ONE.—It is said that by the following simple method almost instant relief of carache is afforded: Put five drops of chloroform on a little cotton or wool in the bowl of a clay pipe, then blow the vapour through the stem into the aching ear.

T. L. A. C.—There are no such things as love-powders. Give up all notions of winning love save by natural attractiveness and good qualities. No man or woman was ever influenced to love another in the way in which you are looking for assistance.

LAURETTE.—Affaire d'amour means a love affair; affaire d'honneur, an affair of honour; affaire du cœur, an affair of the heart. They are all French phrases. Julia is a Latin name, the feminine form of Julius, and means the same as Julius, i.e., "soft-haired." The French and Germans write it Julie, the Italians, Giulia, and the Spaniards and Portuguese, Julia. Every nation, however, pronounces it differently.

FRED S.—Our advice to you as to all other bashful young men is to go into the company of ladies whenever opportunity offers. It is only in society that you will grow bold. Experience and effort are the means of growth in social qualities. Make yourself agreeable to the young lady by gifts of flowers and candies and invitations to entertainments. A good trade is a good reliance for means of a living and support for a family.

S. E. T.—It is not right for a gentleman to take up the attention of a lady and win her affections without declaring his intentions of marrying within a reasonable time, and you have been very foolish in tolerating your dilatory heart for such a long period. The best course to adopt now is to get your father or brother or nearest male relative to speak to the gentleman and ascertain his intentions towards you. If you would speak candidly to him yourself it would not be improper or indelicate, under the circumstances. Such danglers enjoy an immunity in this country unpermitted in any other. A woman of spirit will not permit it.

YOUNG GIRLS.

These beautiful human flowers
We daily, hourly meet,
Within their pleasant, quiet homes,
Or in the busy street.

These blossoms sweet and fair
That make life's ways so bright,
Heaven shield them from the tempest's power
And guide their feet aright.

In this their youth's clear day,
In this their life's fair morn,
Made worthy to be mothers pure
Of nations yet unborn!

To mould the minds of men,
Whose future work shall be
To carry out God's mighty plan
Of human liberty.

May fashion's wildering power,
And pleasure's siren song,
Never plant the seeds of folly where
The germs of grace belong!

M. A. K.

EXPERIENCE.—We know of no school such as you desire, though there are excellent teachers of elocution who may do much to supply the deficiency. We would advise your son to become the pupil of some competent actor, who can give him the benefit of his experience and artistic culture. He should become a member of an amateur dramatic club, to give him familiarity with the details of stage life, as well as confidence in facing an audience, which can only be acquired by practice and proficiency in minor rôles.

A. P. B.—That a young man delights in kissing a young lady is no evidence of love whatever. He is rather more likely to love one with whom he has never been permitted to take such a liberty. No young lady is justified in allowing a gentleman to kiss her until she is engaged to him or he has given good evidence that he is a candidate for her hand in marriage. If you would like to win this young man, stop all such familiarity at once. It will give him a little shock, but when he understands your reasons, he will have a greater respect for you, and it will turn his thoughts in the direction of marriage. It is not permitted to a young lady to take the initiative in courting, and all that you can do is to show yourself agreeable, accomplished and entertaining.

D. G. S.—A certain sort of music seems to have existed in all countries and among the oldest nations of whose history we have knowledge. It has been cultivated from time immemorial. Representations on Egyptian obelisks and tombs prove that they had various instruments, both wind and stringed. The Hebrew music is frequently referred to in the Bible, yet we have no melodies now that can be identified as those used in the temple service. The Greeks numbered music among the sciences, and had many hundreds of musical signs. The Greek drama was a musical recitation. The theatres were very large, without roof, and the music was a sort of sonorous declamation, to which the music of our days bears a relation but with slight resemblance. About the beginning of the sixth century, St. Ambrose and Gregory the Great directed their attention to the improvement of church music, and to them are attributed a decided advance in the art.

FARMER GEORGE.—To prevent haystacks firing scatter a few handfuls of common salt between each layer. The salt, by absorbing the humidity of the hay, not only prevents its fermentation and consequent heating, but it also adds a salty taste to this forage, which all cattle like; besides, it stimulates the appetite and assists their digestion, and so preserves them from many diseases.

P. S. W.—Let people talk. If men are to be avoided just because they are married they had better never go out. The most sensible thing to do, under the circumstances, would be to walk and talk with him, so long as your ways were identical. Of course you should not make any marked endeavours to claim his attention, nor let him put himself out to keep you company.

F. W. P.—Do not grow impatient. Give the young lady a little time to arrange her home matters. If you seriously contemplate matrimony, visit her as soon as possible, so that her good impression of you may not be effaced. There is nothing like a genuine courtship for promoting love, and when you have won the lady, do not put off the marriage longer than necessary to make all the arrangements.

C. A.—Such difficulties do not unfrequently occur and in all such cases perfect frankness on the part of the gentleman will save a world of trouble and sorrow. Let him choose and declare his love and his intentions. Then make the engagement known at once. There may be a little surprise, but this will be trifling compared with the perplexity of such a position as he now occupies.

E. L. D.—While we cannot entirely approve of all that you have done, your motives have been good, and no harm can well result. Since you have corresponded with the gentleman, we do not think that you need hesitate to see him should he call upon you. Before granting him the privilege, you should ascertain all that you can in reference to his character and standing where he lives. We advise you to stick to your present business and occupation. You cannot earn a living more easily or more respectably.

EXPERIMENTALITY.—Chlorine and its compounds cannot be used for bleaching sponges, as they impart a yellow colour to the latter, which in addition become hard and lose their fine texture. The method now generally employed is a water solution of sulphurous acid, and requires from six to eight days, and considerable manipulation. According to the latest research made in Germany, the bleaching of sponges can be performed more conveniently and expeditiously by means of bromine dissolved in water. As is well known, one part of bromine requires thirty parts of water to dissolve it, and thus a concentrated solution can easily be obtained by dropping a few drops of the former into a bottle of distilled water and shaking it. The sponges are submerged in this solution, and after the lapse of a few hours their brown colour changes to a lighter one, the dark red bromine solution, changing at the same time to light yellow. By treating the sponges to a second immersion in a fresh solution they acquire the desired light colour in a short time. They are improved still more if finally dipped in dilute sulphuric acid and washed with cold water.

LOTTERY.—The paper wedding is celebrated one year after date of marriage, and relatives and intimate friends, who receive invitations, may present gifts in paper—photos, engravings, stationery, books, &c. The fifth anniversary of a wedding is the wooden wedding. Invitations to this are printed on wood, and wooden presents are given. The tenth anniversary is the tin wedding, and cards of tin bronze, enclosed in a tin paper envelope with lettering and monogram in the tin, should be used. Gifts should be of tinware. A crystal wedding is the fifteenth anniversary, and glassware is given. Invitations should be issued on crystallized paper, or on gelatine. The twentieth anniversary is the linen wedding, and linen cards and envelopes are used. Fine white paper, lettered in silver and gold is used for the invitations to the silver wedding—the twenty-fifth anniversary—and the golden wedding—the fiftieth anniversary. The diamond wedding is the seventy-fifth. These should have the words "Please omit gifts," or, "It is preferred that no gifts be offered," added at the bottom of the invitation card. Or a separate card, bearing this request, may be enclosed in the envelope.

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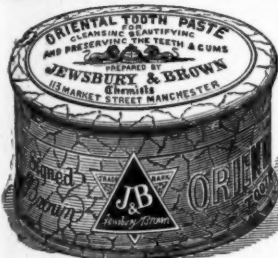
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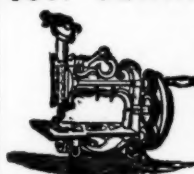
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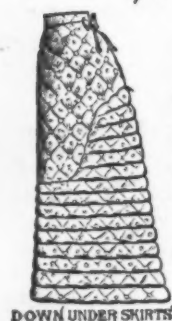
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